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SAINT LUKE  
HIS LIFE, CHARACTER  
AND TEACHING

HARRISON

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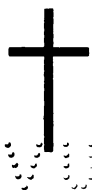
**SAINT LUKE**  
**HIS LIFE, CHARACTER**  
**AND TEACHING**

**BEING**

**BRIEF SPIRITUAL READINGS**  
**FOR ADVENT AND LENT**

**BY**

**McVEIGH HARRISON, O. H. C.**



**PUBLISHED AT SAINT ANDREW'S**  
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**TO THE NOBLE COMPANY OF  
OUR BENEFACTORS  
WHO HAVE BLESSED SAINT ANDREW'S  
BY THEIR LOVE AND SYMPATHY  
THEIR PRAYERS AND ALMS  
THIS LITTLE BOOK  
IS GRATEFULLY  
DEDICATED**



**This volume has received the approval  
of two members of the Order of the Holy  
Cross, and is published by direction of  
the Superior.**

**JAMES O. S. HUNTINGTON,  
*Superior, O. H. C.***



## P R E F A C E

**T**HE material of this little book is, in substance, that which I used in the "long retreat" of our Order, at Holy Cross Monastery, last July. I hoped that by adapting the addresses to the spiritual needs of souls living "in the world," I might transmit to others outside the cloister the blessings which our Lord bestowed so generously upon us, through the personality and writings of "Luke the Beloved."

My principal debts are to Dr. Plummer, Sir William Ramsay, and Fr. Rackham, C. R.; but there are many others to whom I owe only a little less of whatever is good in these pages.

The humble office I have tried to perform has been that of selecting for busy people the helpful bits from texts which otherwise would probably remain closed to them, applying these to the needs of every-day life, and packing the whole in a book small enough to be carried in a top-coat pocket. If I have succeeded in this plan, so that my readers will really take "St. Luke" about with

them during Advent and Lent, I shall say "Deo Gratias!" with great fervor, for I shall have attained the height of my ambition.

McVEIGH HARRISON, O. H. C.

Saint Andrew's, Tennessee,  
All Saints' Day, 1917.

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED

A. V.= Authorized (King James') Version.

A. V. Marg.= "Marginal Readings" edition of the Authorized Version.

R. V.= Revised Version, Oxford edition.

R. V. Marg.= marginal reading of the Revised Version.

f.= the next verse in addition to the one cited.

ff.= the next two verses in addition to the one cited.

Single quotation marks ( ' ' ) indicate a literal translation.

All citations are inclusive of the last verse cited.

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## SPIRITUAL READINGS ON SAINT LUKE

### ADVENT

#### Saint Luke, the Man

At the very outset, let us pause to realize how exceedingly human our chosen Saint was.

He seems to have been a Gentile, for St. Paul, in Col. iv, 11, 14, distinguishes him from "those of the Circumcision"; and there is good reason for thinking that he was a Greek of Macedonia and probably a native of Philippi. Now observe with what true Greek civic pride he says of his own city that it was a Roman colony and "the first of the district" (Acts xvi, 12, R.V.). He displays, moreover, all a Macedonian's satirical humor over the wagging heads and conflicting opinions of the Athenian philosophers. They *expressed* genuine interest in St. Paul's message, but really "all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there had leisure for nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts xvii, 18-21, R.V.).

Along with these more ordinary traits of his nationality and age, our Saint possessed the soul, even if not the actual brush, of a painter. One of the pictures of the Blessed Virgin attributed to him

is certainly very ancient. But, apart from this, the marvelous word-pictures drawn in his Gospel, which the painters of all ages have best loved to reproduce in form and color, prove St. Luke's artistic genius beyond a doubt.

Furthermore, both his Gospel and the Acts reveal him as a physician. He alone remarks that Simon Peter's mother-in-law had 'a *high* fever,' and that the Good Samaritan poured in oil and wine *as he bound up* the traveler's wounds, indicating that the bandages were soaked with the medicines. Again, St. Mark refers to the mustard seed in Christ's parable as sown 'on the earth,' and St. Matthew speaks of it as sown in the farmer's field; but St. Luke says that the man planted it 'in his own garden,' a little autobiographical note, perhaps, giving us a glimpse of the scholarly doctor among his herbs. There is a touch of professional *esprit de corps* in his account of the woman with the issue. St. Mark declares that she had suffered much at the hands of physicians, and was worse rather than better. But dear Doctor Luke says simply that no physician *could* cure her.

We are then to have no lay figure, but a genuine flesh and blood brother, before us. Let us fully appreciate the fact, that, in his life-long struggle after perfection, his experience was for all the world like our own, except for his saintly heroism and higher success.



## **Our Saint, the Typical Disciple of Jesus**

"By this," said our Lord, "shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." And love was the basis of St. Luke's character. He was 'the physician, the beloved one.' His charity reached out open arms for all. His two books display an eager, longing love for the abhorred Gentiles. His Gospel is called the "Gospel of Women," whom the ancient world despised. Greeks and Romans exposed female babies, and the Jew in his liturgy thanked God that he had not been born a woman; but the 'beloved physician' delights to record how our Lord and His Apostles were cared for, much of the time, by the purses of holy women (St. Luke viii, 1-3).

It was love, again, which taught him self-effacement. The one sign that he has joined St. Paul, in the Acts, is the change of the pronoun he uses to "we." He was always on hand as doctor or preacher when the great Apostle needed him most, but he enters upon the scene as unobtrusively as possible.

Human nature in him was not annihilated, or supplanted, or even superseded, by grace. It was consecrated. Our particular endowment, our personality, like his, must remain, but, like his also, it must be caught up to higher levels and transformed by the slow miracle of grace.





### **His First Appearance**

If we study Acts xvi, 6-10, we observe that St. Paul, on his Second Missionary Journey, was led directly across Asia Minor, forbidden to preach as he had planned, and finally was brought to Troas, away off the line of the natural development of his mission, without his knowing in the least why he had been guided thither. "The sweep and rush of the narrative is unique in Acts," says Sir Wm. Ramsay. There is remarkable personal feeling shown by the author, and this is entirely exceptional in St. Luke's writings. Then, at Troas, a vision appeared to St. Paul by night, wherein (to translate the original literally) a *certain man*, a Macedonian, was standing before him, urging him and saying, 'come over into Macedonia and help us.' And when he saw the vision, "immediately *we* sought to go out [from Asia] into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that God has summoned *us* to bring the Gospel to them." This is the first appearance of that significant pronoun indicating the advent of St. Luke, and it is very probable that he was the man in the vision. Let us summarize Ramsay's argument for this latter contention. The Macedonian was apparently known to St. Paul, for he says that it was a "certain man," although even his nationality would not have appeared from his clothing or appearance. No doubt the identity of his mysterious visitor was made known to him by revelation. Just as, immediately after his conversion, our Lord had forewarned him that on the

morrow 'a man named Ananias' would come to him, so now St. Luke was first introduced to the great Apostle in a vision, and then came in the morning. That very hour ('immediately') they sat down and planned out the Macedonian journey, saying to each other, "God has assuredly summoned us to bring the Gospel to them."

How often in our lives there comes a period of anxious waiting and doubt, while we are being led we know not whither! Then, quite unexpectedly, comes the vision revealing not only the Divine purpose to send us forth on some enterprise for Christ, but the fellowship by which we are to be cheered and helped.



### **The Love of the Son of God for Us**

St. Luke, painter-like, sometimes draws us a lovely picture in a single word. Once, in his Gospel (vii, 16), the people were rejoicing after the resuscitation of the widow of Nain's son. "God," they said, "hath *visited* His people"; and their Greek word, in the sense they used it, is one which was customarily appropriated to the physician's visit. Naturally the saintly doctor caught, and loved, their idea, that Jesus, Incarnate God, is the Good Physician who came from Heaven to revive our stricken race.

Let us follow up this thought of Christ's infinite tenderness for us in His Divine Person. As God, One with His Father, His love for His people was unspeakably great, so that it appears in the Scrip-

tures as extending even to small details of their life. For example, we see His boundless care for them in the Old Testament provision that the poor might offer in sacrifice "a pair of turtle doves or two *young* pigeons." The mature pigeons in Palestine are too wild to be snared; therefore God's humble worshipers were allowed to offer Him the nestlings. Again, when the holy women were approaching the sepulchre on Easter morning He pitied their weakness, and sent His angel to roll away the stone from before the tomb, "for it was very great." He has taught us, indeed, that the fall of one sparrow, valued at perhaps one-fifth of a penny, is known to him as God (St. Luke xii, 6). The words were spoken of the Father, indeed, but our Lord has said, "I am in My Father." The Father and Son are one in Essence, and that Essence is Love. But if a sparrow is individually present to His mind, how much more must I be always in His thought, since I cost His life! "There is no plant so tiny," said the Rabbis, "but it has its Prefect in Heaven." As for me, God loves every hair of my head.

We shall find our Evangelist often speaking on this favorite theme of his. But he seems to have tried to express it completely in one marvelously tender saying of our Saviour, preserved in his Gospel alone: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's *good pleasure*, to *give* you the Kingdom." He seeks in these words to make us realize that God *wants* to bestow upon us the whole glorious realm of His love.

### **The Love of the Son of Man for Us**

St. Luke, alone among the Evangelists, uses a term for Christ which means either "Child," or "Servant," "of God," and this is one of many signs that he especially loved the sacred Manhood of Christ. We note his unique record that the widow's son and Jairus' daughter and the demoniac boy were the 'only begotten' of their parents. Evidently he had noticed that this fact especially appealed to the human heart of Jesus.

Many precious little marks of this same tenderness appear in the Gospels. Our Lord's favorite name for us is "little ones." He was willing to be identified with the most obscure of His human brethren. "Are we not right," the Jews taunted Him, "that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" But He answered only, "I have not a devil." He was willing to be thought a Samaritan. Indeed it is evident, in the Third Gospel especially, that He is pitifully eager to be friends in the deepest sense with every man. Never did He refuse a chance to win a lover. There is no instance of His declining an invitation, even though He knew that He was walking straight into a trap of the Pharisees. He would risk His very life on the barest chance of gaining even a little more human love.



### **Our Response to Jesus' Love**

The love we are to have for Jesus the God-man, in response to the perfection of His love for us, is

so wonderful that St. Luke and his fellow-writers of the sacred Scriptures required a new word to express it. Classical Greek provided them with a term for the calm love of mere natural friendship, but the Holy Spirit must needs dictate a special term for the soul's utter devotion to its Spouse.

Now, so far from falling short of St. Luke's love, we ought to have more than he, because during the Christian ages the Church has developed and increased our knowledge of Christ. Probably St. Luke realized but dimly the full meaning of what the Blessed Spirit guided him to set down, whereas we know the wonderful depth, and relation to one another, of the Gospel truths about our Saviour.

Let our love have these qualities. It must be free, for we often protest to Him, in reciting our psalter, "an offering of a free heart will I give Thee." It must be without reserve, for David in another place teaches us to say, "With my whole heart have I sought Thee." Lastly, it must be disinterested. A certain obscure old woman, who knew only the rudiments of the Christian Faith, may teach us a very edifying lesson in this regard. She had toiled through a long life full of bitter disappointments. Of her four sons, one was a consumptive and three were criminals. Yet she rejoiced with a radiant face, and fervently thanked God, for the ministry of a priest who had grown up with her own boys and had attained to what had been her great ambition for at least one of them. "I am so glad! I am so *proud* to see you a minister!" she said over and over again. Thus unselfish love

makes us careless whether or not we, or ours, minister to Christ, if only He is well served.



### Prayer

The dear Saint who is guiding us is a notable teacher of prayer. He preserves for us the sole record of seven occasions when our Lord prayed : that is, at His Baptism, before His first conflict with the Jewish hierarchy, before He chose the twelve, before His first prediction of His Passion, on the occasion of His Transfiguration, before He taught the Lord's Prayer, and His last word on the cross.

Moreover, he alone preserves Christ's parables which teach persistence in prayer (St. Luke xi, 5 ff.; xviii, 1 ff.). The first of these is about the friend who came at midnight to obtain a loaf of bread for an unexpected guest. In the East, people have always preferred to journey at night, to avoid the intense heat of the day, but this traveler arrived at an unusually inconvenient hour, and found an empty larder. The host, however, called upon his neighbor, and, by his "shameless persistence in begging," as we may paraphrase the Greek, extorted from him three loaves. Now our Lord would have us to be importunate in continual prayer to the prodigal Giver of all blessings, as this man was in begging from his churlish neighbor. We must *ask*, *seek* (by calling), and *knock*, at the door, growing in the intensity of our supplication until we gain our petition.

The second of St. Luke's unique parables of prayer, that wherein the poor widow supplicates the unjust judge, is told by our Lord in the most vivid way, in order to correct a certain false Jewish teaching. God, they said, must not be wearied by overmuch supplication. They permitted prayer not oftener than three times a day, and explicitly forbade it to be offered hourly. But our Lord taught them that even this corrupt magistrate, influenced by fear that a persistent woman would 'wear him black and blue' by her frequent pleas, at length avenged her. Now, if an unjust judge like this would yield to the importunity of an unknown widow, who came and appealed to him at intervals, how much more will a just God be ready to avenge His own elect, when they cry to him day and night. "He will speedily avenge them, and is long-suffering toward them." The tender heart of God has endless patience with the poverty of our prayers.

### **Intercession**

If we are right in believing that St. Luke was one of the Seventy Disciples, we have in his Gospel the narrative of his first mission (x, 1-17). His eager ear drank in the instruction of his Divine Superior as he was dismissed with these words, "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall turn to you again." Thus was taught him the great spiritual truth that no petition to God for his gift of peace

to another soul can ever be lost. No intercession, therefore, can be really wasted. As Bengel says, "Nothing which once goes forth from the riches of God ever goes forth in vain, but is sure to find some heart in which it may lodge."

Through intercession, moreover, we have a means of blessing others which is far beyond anything we could do for them by the use of all our own resources. When we have done our utmost for those we love, and have at least apparently failed, let us not despair. We have still the mighty power of Christ which He stands ready to put at our disposal. Once He was standing in the Court of the Women, in the Temple, when the shadows were gathering and yet the great lamps had not been lighted. It was then that He said, "I am the light of the World." And again, on the octave day of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the silver pitcher was brought from Siloam empty, according to the custom, He stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." It is in the utter failure of my own natural resources, that Christ's figure stands out most clearly against the background of darkness. It is in the time when I realize that souls would famish, spite of all that I could myself do for them, that I shall with entire conviction seek for them abundant grace from Jesus.



### **The Blessed Sacrament**

In the Third Gospel there is given a very suggestive detail of that miracle wherein our Lord



healed the woman with the issue of blood. This is the fact that she touched but the "tassel" or "fringe," of His garment (viii, 44, in the Greek). And St. Luke goes on to quote our Lord's declaration that He was conscious of power going forth from Him at the moment of her touch. Thus the miracle helps us to understand that, while we *touch* only the "fringe" of our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament, we nevertheless lay hold on Him in each good Communion and draw grace from His life-giving Humanity.

But what is grace? One popular answer is that the grace of God, which is His gift to us, is identical with His inseparable attribute of graciousness. Another modern theory would teach us that the presence of God in our souls constitutes the "state of grace" therein. Indeed one scholar of some note says boldly that "grace is God," and another of wide reputation tells us that it is "a little part of God." Scarcely less bizarre is the very latest of these non-Catholic views: that is, that grace is a fragment of Christ's Humanity, which we receive in the Holy Communion and retain within us. But in truth the Church of God has always taught this simple, precious truth about the matter: grace is spiritual life, communicated to us from the human soul of Jesus, whereby we are made more like Him.

There is another difficulty about the Holy Mysteries of the Altar upon which St. Luke sheds a flood of light. This is the seeming impossibility of the whole of Christ being present in a tiny fragment of the Blessed Sacrament. Yet, was He not

standing among the Eleven in the upper room as really *before* He revealed Himself as after? (St. Luke xxiv, 36 ff.). But His presence up to the moment He appeared, while it was absolutely real, filled no space at all. In the same way His Risen Body is present, unextended, in every separate portion of the Heavenly Bread, as really as if He manifested Himself in His extended and visible Humanity, upon His altar throne.



### **Holy Communion**

The simplest possible record of the Apostolic Faith and Practice in regard to Holy Communion is this statement about the faithful of Jerusalem, Mother of all churches: "They continued steadfastly in the breaking of the Bread" (Acts ii, 42, literally translated). But let us remember that the scene of their Sacred Banquet was that 'Upper Room' where they had first heard our Lord say of the Bread in His hand, "This is My Body." And St. Paul leaves us no room for doubt about their conviction as to the nature of this Blessed Bread, for he says: "The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?"

There was to their minds, moreover, a special appropriateness in this name for the most august of mysteries. For, to a Semite, the breaking of bread was the sharing of the life principle contained in the food. This is why the fiercest sheik in the Sahara will never harm even an enemy who has broken bread with him. He cannot slay one who

partakes of the same life which he has received. Very easily and naturally, therefore, these cousins of the Arabs accepted the Holy Communion as the Sacrament of Unity. "We who are many," says St. Paul, their spokesman, "are one Bread, one Body, for we all partake of the one Bread" (1 Cor. x, 17).

Probably, too, another thought akin to this last was in their minds. The heathen around them believed that, in eating little cakes devoted to their gods, they received the life of these divinities. The Jews, moreover, were divinely taught that through their offering of wheaten meal, which they also consumed, they were brought nearer to Jehovah and shared in some sense in His Holiness. But neither the devotees of Greek mysteries nor God's ancient people were satisfied. From the depths of their souls came a pitiful appeal for some means whereby they might really live with divine life, and the Apostolic Church went straight forth from Christ to Jew and Gentile alike with the Broken Bread. For this is the means to poor fallen creatures of union with the God-Man and, through Him, of being "partakers of the Divine Nature" (2 St. Peter i, 4).



### **Preparation for Holy Communion**

Just before His Passion our Lord needed a room wherein to institute the Divine Mysteries. St. Luke relates that He sent forward to a certain householder and asked for the general living room on the

first floor, where ordinary guests were received (xxii, 11, in the Greek). He sought indeed the very accommodations which were refused Him on the first Christmas Eve, since the distinctive Greek word for "guest-chamber" here is the same as that used for "inn" in the narrative of the Holy Nativity (St. Luke ii, 7). But now, for the initial celebration of the Christian Passover, our Lord, with evident appreciation, foresaw that the good man of the house would provide him with "a large *upper* room *furnished*." Let me ask myself searchingly: Do I ever refuse Christ a lodging when it is inconvenient to rise from my bed and open the door for Him? Or do I give Him just my everyday heart for His dwelling, when He comes? Shall I not be generous and give Him more than He absolutely demands, a soul great and lofty and furnished with the virtues He loves?

It is true, indeed, that the blessing which our own soul receives from each Communion depends entirely upon our receptiveness. Our Lord's eager love would give grace and glory and withhold no good thing from it (Psalm lxxxiv, 11). "That My House may be filled" is His desire. And the Christian soul, on its own part, like material nature, "abhors a vacuum." Only our own indifference and indolence, therefore, can keep our Communion from filling us with grace. But far more compelling is the thought that Holy Communion is our opportunity to show our love for Jesus. St. Luke says of blessed Mary Magdalen "that she kissed His feet much" (vii, 38, 45, R.V.

Marg.). The compound verb we thus render "to kiss much," or "repeatedly," always in the New Testament denotes devotion, except once where great love was pretended. It is used only here in this passage, in that which tells of the kisses which the father gave his returning prodigal son (xv, 20), of the Ephesian elders' farewell kisses to St. Paul (Acts xx, 37), and of Judas' kisses (St. Mark xiv, 45). Now, in Holy Communion we "kiss the Son" (Psalm, ii, 12, where the Greek version uses this same compound verb). Let our kisses be always those of the devoted lovers of Jesus.



### **Thanksgiving after Holy Communion**

Our dear Lord and His eleven faithful Apostles set us the example of thanking God for the greatest of His gifts; for, after they had received the Blessed Sacrament the first time, they sang a psalm of thanksgiving (St. Matt. xxvi, 30). Even the Rabbinical learning of the early Christians would have taught them this lesson of gratitude for any blessing of Divine Providence, since the Talmud declares that "he who enjoys aught without thanksgiving is as though he robbed God." But in the Catholic Church men learned to think of their Communion as "the Heavenly Gift" (Heb. vi, 4), for which praise was due to God as for none other on earth.

It meant to them so deep a thanksgiving, however, that it could only be begun in psalms of rejoicing. They remembered how our Lord had

said, "This Cup is the New Covenant in My Blood" (St. Luke xxii, 20). His covenant pledge of Salvation therefore was renewed in each Communion. It was their part, each time they received Him, to renew their covenant vows, to renounce the devil and believe the Faith and do the will of God. Of disciples who had been continuing steadfastly in the breaking of the Blessed Bread, St. Luke says, "with great power they gave back their witness to the Risen Christ" (Acts iv, 33, according to the Greek). How glorious it would be if the life of each communicant were a Eucharistic Miracle, an unanswerable proof of the Resurrection, because men would see that we must have been fed upon the Body of Incarnate God.



### **The Holy Sacrifice**

In instituting the Holy Communion, Jesus said, "This is My Body, which is broken for you"; and then added, "Do," or "offer," "This for My memorial." Thus it was His dying request that we should present before His Father the memorial sacrifice of His broken Body, mystically immolated in the Blessed Eucharist. He "did institute, and in His Holy Gospel command us to continue," says our Prayer Book, "a perpetual memory of His precious death and sacrifice." Then, after the Consecration, in which the unbloody Offering is effected, the prayer continues: "we do celebrate and make here before Thy Divine Majesty, with these Thy Holy gifts which we now offer unto

Thee, the memorial Thy Son hath commanded us to make." We could not wish for clearer, simpler teaching of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

The Apostolic Church, being composed principally of Jews, was accustomed to the Old Testament grouping together of all sacrifices under the name "the bread of God." "The Breaking of the Bread" had for them therefore a sacrificial meaning. Now they had learned from Christ to ask their Heavenly Father to "give them day by day their daily bread." It was with desire to give to Him each day the Bread which even He is pleased to receive, that they celebrated the Holy Eucharist daily (Acts ii, 46).

Moreover, they have taught us a lesson much needed in the present day: that is, to offer the Eucharist of the Holy Ghost (Acts xiii, 2). A literal translation of the passage cited is as follows: "As they offered the Liturgy to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Dr. Swete observes that the Greek "places the command of the Holy Ghost in the light of an answer to the prayers of the Church. 'You have sought guidance. Here it is.'" May God speed the day when our own priests will preface every Retreat, or Church Council, or other important event in Church life, with Eucharists offered to the Father for guidance by His Blessed Spirit.

### **Our Meditation**

As we study St. Luke's description of St. John Baptist's imprisonment (vii, 18-23), it becomes clear that he was sorely tempted to impatience. Why did not Christ overthrow such sources of unlimited evil as Antipas and Herodias? was the question which the Pharisees, and even his own disciples, kept asking him, until at last he sent them to Christ with this inquiry: "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another [of a different kind]?" It was to be reassured and helped to bear his long captivity in the gloomy dungeon of Machærus, that he sought our Lord. And Christ for His answer pointed to His Character as displayed in manifold works of love. "Go and tell John of the things ye have seen and heard," He said, pointing to the lepers cleansed, and those brought back to life, but still further calling attention to the fact that He was preaching the Gospel to the poor,—the poor! "whom the Greek despised and the Roman trampled on, and whom the priest and the Levite left on one side."

Our great recourse in times of temptation is to the Christ of the Scriptures. We must take the advice of a great mission preacher, the present Bishop of London, when our Christianity is attacked by impatience or doubt, or what not: "We must soak in the Gospels."

Thus shall we be saved from both of the faults, to one or the other of which probably all temperaments tend. If we persevere in daily meditation



we cannot well take that crass, material, prosaic mental attitude which would reduce everything to money, or efficiency, or the like. Pascal tells us of some mathematicians among his contemporaries, whose only remark upon Corneille's dramas was, "What does all that poetry prove?" One feels sure that they were not in the habit of making their meditations. On the other hand, we need a preventive of mere idealistic dreaming, and we shall find it in drawing always nearer in spirit and will to that God, Who "worketh hitherto" His works of practical love.



### **The Help of the Holy Spirit**

The Third Gospel has preserved for us perhaps the most precious of all the incidents in our Lord's Life. It tells us of the one time when He "rejoiced," or, as we may translate more literally, "exulted" (St. Luke x, 21, R. V.). How wonderful it must have been to see the look of happiness in His Eyes! But even on this unique occasion of special rejoicing, His feelings were restrained and spiritualized: "He exulted in the Holy Spirit." As it was with our Lord, so let it be with us. Thanksgiving for a spiritual gain or any success must never become *elation*. It must be controlled by the "Spirit of a Sound Mind" (2 St. Tim. i, 7).

It is our chosen Evangelist, also, who reveals another truth. Speaking of our Saviour's temptation, he says: "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, . . . was led by the Spirit in the wilderness forty days,

being tempted by the devil." All during that long struggle His Human Will was sustained by the Blessed Comforter. And from the Heart of Jesus He comes into our hearts, bringing us courage and strength to overcome this same tempter of our Lord. Indeed He teaches us to repeat Christ's very words of resistance. As, in Gethsemane, under the terrible pressure of temptation to shrink from His cross, He cried, "Abba Father, not My Will but Thine be done," so in every strain upon our wills the Holy Paraclete speaks in our hearts those words of our Master, "Abba Father" (Gal. iv, 6; Rom. viii, 15).

But whether we study the spiritual experience of our Saviour or His loving labor for men, we find that in all things, He left His sacred Humanity to be guided and empowered by the Holy Ghost. We read that he "returned [from the Mount of Temptation] in the power of the Spirit," to enter upon His ministry; and He ascribed all the zeal and efficiency of His service to souls to the fact that He was anointed with the Unction of the Holy Ghost (St. Luke iv, 14-18). He deliberately set aside the infinite help of His own Godhead, in order that His Manhood might depend upon the Comforter, and it was His blessed purpose in this to teach us how we are to live our whole spiritual life in union with the Holy Ghost.



### **Wisdom's Children**

One of the penalties we must pay, for the sake of being Jesus' friends, is that we shall often seem foolish to non-Catholics around us. It was so with our Lord and His saintly Forerunner (St. Luke vii, 31-35). The men of that generation, that is to say the Jews, found fault with both, although their two modes of living, according to their different vocations, were almost opposite to each other. Like children in one of the games of that day, they had "piped" to St. John, and he had refused to dance, which means that they had found him so severely ascetical that he would not participate in their festivals. Christ, on the other hand, came unto them as the Bringer of joy, whereupon they complained of His refusal to fast and make His disciples fast as much as the Rabbis considered pious, saying, as it were, "We have waited to you, and ye have not wept." "But," our Lord concludes, as we may translate His words literally, "Wisdom is vindicated at the hands of all her children." Churchmen ought not to be surprised, therefore, if we are rebuked, on the one hand for dancing, and on the other for fasting.

In fact, our Lord plainly taught us that our life "born of the Spirit" is an unearthly, supernatural one. He draws a comparison between the wind and this new life bestowed by the Holy Ghost upon the baptized. For (1) as the wind blows and yet we cannot tell whence it comes or whither it goes, so the new life from the Blessed Spirit springs from

a mysterious source and moves to a mysterious goal. (2) This new life is independent of all human control,—excepting, of course, that of Church and State, as we are taught elsewhere. It is from God and is not subject to man: it “breatheth where it listeth” (St. John iii, 4, R. V. Marg.). (3) Yet it produces good works which are characteristic of it: “thou hearest the sound thereof.”



### **Our Spiritual Eye**

Meditation is a spiritual means of saving us from careless familiarity with Christ. It is rightly said, that “those who are close to what is great do not appreciate the greatness.” The Nazarenes lived very close to Christ for thirty years, yet they knew Him not, indeed none were so impervious to the truth about Him as they, because they did not observe Him receptively. The Blessed Virgin knew perfectly well that her Son could even work the stupendous miracle which was required in order to fill the empty wine jars at the wedding feast of Cana. She had never seen Him do any mightier work than the chores about the household or the labors of the carpenter shop. But hers was a heart which “pondered” the revelation God had given her (St. Luke ii, 19).

Christ has made it abundantly clear to us that the singleness of our spiritual eye is of supreme importance to our souls and our neighbors (St. Luke xi, 33-36). Day by day, in meditation, we need to direct it toward Him afresh, for if it admits rival

images along with His, our whole interior will be full of darkness. And, because we cannot help others unless our own spiritual vision is clear, the eye of our soul should be like a burning lamp which gives light to all. We must not keep it "in the cellar," that is, fastened on the provisions for the household; nor under a bushel measure, which means that our attention must not be primarily on temporal gain; nor under a bed (St. Mark iv, 21), in other words submerged by household cares. We are to be seers, visionaries, illuminated by Divine Truth ourselves, and so giving light from God to all who enter our homes.



### **Bible Study**

St. Luke pictures our Lord preaching to the multitudes on the lake shore (v, 3), using "Peter's boat as a pulpit, whence to throw the net of the Gospel over his hearers." He was *prepared*, because His Human Mind was already full of Divine Truth. We also must be ready to seize our chance when it comes, and this will mean faithful study of the Bible with the help of the best commentators.

Our Lord calls the interpretation of Holy Scripture "the key of knowledge," and those who used it wrongly or dishonestly, He said, "took it away," so that neither they entered nor would they allow others, who were continually trying to go in, to pass the portal (St. Luke xi, 52). And this door leads to the knowledge of God and salvation.

We see, therefore, our obligation as Christians to be well taught in God's Holy Word, and also the opportunity that awaits us. Let us then appropriate the rules of devout, ascetical study which St. Luke laid down for himself (i, 1-4, R.V.). He tells us that he has (1) begun *at the beginning*, and gone through (2) "*all things*" concerning our Lord, (3) *accurately* and (4) *systematically* ("in order").

Yet our Saint had heard Jesus exult and thank His Father, that He had revealed the great truths about His Kingdom to "babes," and had hidden them from the "wise and understanding," that is, in their own conceit. It was matter of gratitude to Him that His Father had proved Himself independent of human intellect. We shall need for our Bible study, therefore, love for God's Word and simplicity of heart, far more even than intellectual labor.



### **Spiritual Reading**

It is fundamental that our study of spiritual writers must first of all convince ourselves. We need have no scruple about appropriating and using as our own the ideas we get from our reading, if only we have adopted them for the guidance of our own lives. There is an episode in the life of St. Peter which illustrates this point excellently. (Cp. Gal. ii, 11-14 and Acts xv, 10.) St. Paul had rebuked him publicly at Antioch because he had withdrawn from the company of the Gentiles and refused to eat with them, on the ground that they

were uncircumcised. "If thou, being a Jew," said the Apostle of the Gentiles, "livest as do the Gentiles and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" It was St. Paul's characteristic argument: "You have not been able to keep the Jewish ceremonial law, with all the traditions and the inheritance of a Jew to help you. How then do you expect heathen to keep that same law?" This was convincing to St. Peter and he yielded. Moreover, when afterwards he spoke before the Council at Jerusalem, he himself adopted St. Paul's point, and made it in the strongest way, to convince those who were playing the same rôle of Judaizer, which he had enacted at Antioch: "Why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the [Gentile] disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

*Our* rebukes come from the great masters of the spiritual life. Let us sincerely apply them to our own souls, and then, with an utter lack of self-consciousness such as St. Peter displayed, use them humbly and lovingly for the discipline of those whom God places under our instruction.

For He is quite certain to send us souls, either in our Sunday School class, or in our family, or among our friends, who are to us in the same relation which "the most excellent Theophilus" bore to St. Luke. Evidently the writer of the Third Gospel had the upturned face of this "most estimable Friend-of-God" before his eyes as he "wrote unto him to make him know the certainty concern-

ing the things wherein he had been instructed." How many there are like Theophilus, needing to have the unquestioning faith of their childhood confirmed amid the difficulties and doubts which beset their later years? What numbers of professing Christians really do not know what to believe! Let us strive so to learn and live that we shall prove to these our brethren the eternal certainty of the Catholic Creeds.



### **The Blessed Virgin**

Our Saintly instructor is distinguished among the New Testament writers by his special devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Evidently he was her confidant, for he must have received from her lips those precious opening chapters of his Gospel, about the Conception and Birth of our Lord.

It seems therefore surprising that he has assigned to her a place in the Apostolic Church which at first glance appears beneath her dignity. For, after mentioning the Twelve Apostles, he continues: "These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren" (Acts i, 14). But, in fact, she is here mentioned with the women because it was partly for her sake that they were admitted to this solemn assembly, since it was contrary to contemporary ideas that they should be included with the men; for example, in the Temple women had their separate court. Thus began the emancipation of women from the semi-



slavery of their state prior to the Incarnation. They have been saved "through the Child-bearing" of Blessed Mary (1 St. Tim. ii, 15, R. V.). Bishop Wordsworth observes, moreover, that she is separately mentioned among those in the Upper Room on account of her eminence.

Her position there is typical of her relation to the Catholic Church throughout the Christian ages. For she is even now "continuing steadfastly in prayer" to her Son to send down the Holy Ghost upon the faithful, with whom she is of "one heart and soul." Burton says, very beautifully, "As in Bethlehem she had care for the Infant Jesus, so in Jerusalem she nurtured the Infant Church." Now, in Heaven, she is, as St. Bernard declares, "all, and only, tenderness" for each of her Son's brethren. How great should be our affection for her and our confidence in her unremitting, powerful intercessions!



### **The Example of the Blessed Virgin**

"Rightly," cries St. Bernard in a sermon to his Religious, "is the last made first, who, when she was first of all, made herself last. Rightly is she made mistress of all, who showed herself handmaid of all. Rightly, finally, is she exalted above the angels, who, with ineffable modesty, humbled herself below widows and penitents, yes, below her from whom were driven seven demons. I adjure you, dear sons, imitate this virtue, if you love Mary, if you strive to please her."

The virtues of this Blessed Woman's character,

as it is portrayed by the few studied strokes of our painter's pen, are certainly the most wonderful which have adorned the Saints. Apart from the ineffably holy Humanity of Christ, it is true to say, that she was "the world's sad aspirations' one success." Her whole being was absorbed in God, not only her will and intellect, but also those passions and emotions which belong to the lower, more physical part of our nature. "My *soul*," she says in her Magnificat, "doth magnify the Lord and my *spirit* hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." As we study this canticle, the most "magnificent cry of joy that ever issued from a human breast," we observe, with Dean Farrar, that to her vast faith, the whole future work of the yet unborn Christ is already accomplished. "He *hath* showed strength with His Arm," she sang, "He *hath* scattered the proud" and "exalted the humble"; in a word, "He *hath* holpen His servant Israel." Thus Mary is the greatest of the prophets. At the cross she stood, exposed more than all others to the scorn of our Lord's enemies, yet unflinchingly bearing her witness to Him, all the while the sword was transfixing her own heart. She is, therefore, the Queen of Confessors and Martyrs. But perhaps St. John the Evangelist pays her virtue the highest tribute of all. For, after having 'taken her to his own' and known her as a man knows his own mother for many years, he had such great reverence for her, that, in his Gospel he never calls her "Mary," but always speaks of her by her title of honor, as for example, "The Mother of Jesus."

May God give us grace to follow this greatest of Saints in her faith and devotion! St. Austin points out "that the relationship of Mother would not have profited Mary had she not conceived Christ in her heart as well as in her womb." For she was "more blessed in her faith than in her conception." By her conception of Him she shared His Body, but by hearing and keeping the Word of God, she shared His Human Spirit. Therefore, it is in that holiness of hers, which is her greatest claim to honor, that we can imitate her.



### **Our Usefulness to the Church**

When Jesus raised from his bier the son of the widow of Nain, He "gave" the lad to his mother (St. Luke vii, 15). The young man's life belonged to Christ by a new claim, as if our Lord had created him again. But this was an only begotten son, and Jesus restored him to his mother so that he might work for her. So at my baptism, when I was re-born, and at each absolution, especially if my Lord through the priest raised me from mortal sin, He has "given" me back to Mother Church that I may work for her, with a new motive for self-consecration and devotion.

The importance of this service cannot be over-estimated, because our success in it will mean the salvation of immortal souls. In one way or another, we touch a great number of people in our daily life. How can we bring them to Christ in His Church? Let us learn some guiding principles by

the study of the methods which our Lord Himself used to obtain conversions. There was, first of all, His invariable politeness. To take one little example of this, we find Him asking, even of a host like Simon the Pharisee, permission before He spoke (St. Luke vii, 40). And we are urged in Holy Scripture to be ourselves very courteous in speech. "Make full market from the occasion," says St. Paul, as Ramsay paraphrases the passage; "Let your speech be always gracious, seasoned with salt, that you may know the suitable reply to make to everyone" (Col. iv, 5-6). Secondly, Christ took the utmost care to recognize all that was good in those He must oppose and rebuke. Thus, in the beginning of His most terrible denunciation of the Pharisees He said, "*Now* do ye Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and platter," implying that in the beginning it was not so with their caste (St. Luke xi, 39, 42). He meant to remind them of the genuine fervor and piety which had characterized the earliest spiritual ancestors of their society. He applauded also their custom of tithing rue, saying, "this ought ye to have done," since this was not required of them and the tiny sum they thus gave to God was a free-will offering.

Finally, He overlooked no detail of people's welfare, and used every possible means of helping them. Immediately after restoring Jairus' daughter, by the use of His miraculous power, He commanded her parents to give her food. It was as if He meant to teach us that natural means of aiding

our brother must supervene speedily upon the supernatural. Suppose, for example, that we have prayed for the betterment of his soul; we must go on from this to act towards him so as best to co-öperate with God in healing and strengthening him in every way.

Moreover, all of these three are means of exercising a holy personal influence which require no other endowment than grace from the fulness of our Lord, and Christian love deep enough to long for our brother's salvation.



### **Our Usefulness in Teaching the Catholic Faith**

Each loyal disciple of Jesus is His servant, or, as the Greek word used about His followers really means, His "slave." And whenever we realize afresh what a banquet of Divine Love is spread before us, we ought to bethink ourselves that the Lord of the feast sends every one of us forth with this commission: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city. Go out into the highways and hedges [of the country], and constrain men to come in, that My house may be filled" (St. Luke xiv, 21-23).

It is evident that the 'constraint' meant was such as would be exercised through persuasion, for one servant would not be able to use force with a multitude. Yet the word shows that we are to be moved by such a zeal for the Faith, and so great a charity for souls, that we will do our utmost by example and intercession and precept to bring in our brethren. For

if we fail, those souls to whom we were sent will never receive their portion of our Saviour's love.

Moreover, we are not to be discouraged by opposition or even insult. We have in the missionary experience of St. Paul abundant proof that even he, saint and genius as he was, met many a repulse. At Athens, when for many days he had been preaching the Risen Christ to the philosophers, he obtained these results. One party dubbed him a "spermalogos," an Athenian slang term for an ignorant plagiarist who strung together his stolen excerpts without even knowing what they meant. The other group supposed that he was preaching about two false gods, named Jesus and Anastasis (Resurrection) (Acts xvii, 18). But he was so urged on by the desire to gain lovers for Jesus Christ that he could not be discouraged. For surely there is no desire so lofty and so calculated to absorb self as this. We can bear countless rebuffs when we are inspired by the hope of writing even one new name in that Book of Life, which is the Heart of God.



### **Christian Service Through Hospitality**

There is an episode in the life of the great Apostle of the Gentiles which conveys a good lesson to us in regard to our entertainment of guests. This was the occasion when St. Paul and St. Barnabas carried food,—for surely it was this and not useless money,—to the famishing Christians of Jerusalem (Acts xi, 27-30).

Daily, standing in some public place, they relieved their needs, until they had "fulfilled the ministration"; yet all the time Herod's persecution of the Church was raging. Consider the courage, the humility about menial duties, and the charity to souls, which they showed. Let us learn from them the dignity of caring for guests, and of helping those who are weak spiritually, however esteemed by the world. We must never waste the opportunity that our exercise of hospitality affords us to set before our guests the example of Christian living, simply and unobtrusively.

But we shall not be effective for our Lord in this way unless we have definite aims: (1) While we consider it a truly Christian duty to satisfy the bodily needs of our guests, we must have always in mind their immortal souls. Our Lord commissioned the Apostles "to catch men *alive*" (St. Luke v, 10, R. V. Marg.), that is to capture them for immortality. (2) Our hospitality must help our friends to greater holiness. It is rightly said, that "There are few gifts more precious to a soul than to make its sins fewer." (3) We must never permit our guests to make us the ultimate object of their gratitude and affection. We must draw them not to ourselves but to our Lord.

Surely it would be the very essence of selfishness for us to leave souls which we have brought into our own homes totally unenlightened by our holy Christian Faith. How often we say to Jesus, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," and go away to sweet sleep, safe with Him,

because *our* eyes have seen His salvation. But are we oblivious to the fact that this same Salvation is "Prepared before the face of *all* people"? Let us not shrink from doing the work of the Divine Physician. Let us open the blind eyes to the Light of the World.



### The Unearthly Power of the Church

Our guiding Saint, in one passage, places in vivid contrast, as it were on opposite pages, the pictures of the two Kingdoms, the Church and the World (Acts xii, 1-23).

St. Peter in chains represents the Kingdom of the Church. The divinely appointed Key-bearer is locked in prison. He who has power from Christ to bind and loose is himself bound, wrist and ankle, with the heaviest manacles of a Roman prison. Imagine someone saying to the reigning Cæsar: "There is one in your dominions who has the keys of Heaven, and into whose hands God has entrusted the gift of everlasting life. He *was* a fisherman, but he has been taken captive because of his loyalty to a Crucified Master, and he is condemned to die by the sword to-morrow." How Claudius would have sneered, or become furious at such seeming mockery! Yet the prisoner really possessed the immense powers thus claimed for him.

Now contrast with this unseen reality of the Church the splendid, ephemeral Kingdom of the World. Herod ruled over all Palestine and three provinces besides. In the audience St. Luke de-



scribes, he brought Tyre and Sidon also to his feet. He appeared in a robe made entirely of silver, says Josephus, and sat upon a throne in the theatre, surrounded by courtiers. In an oration he declared himself reconciled to his suitors. Immediately the fawning people, led by the professional flatterers of the court, shouted, "It is God's voice, not man's." Thus, nothing was lacking to lift Herod to the zenith of complacent vainglory, when suddenly he was seized with frightful agony, and had to be carried from the throne. Behold the utter downfall of his pride! His body was consumed by worms, until, on the fifth day, he perished miserably. Thereupon his own soldiers and the Gentiles who had so blasphemously flattered him a little before, showed their joy over his death by heaping every insult upon his name and upon his children.

It ought therefore to be an encouragement to us, that the verities of our faith belong to a realm beyond the reach of our senses. The spiritual power of our sacraments, our communion with "just men made perfect" in Heaven, the invisible glory that awaits us,—these are realities, veiled only to give saving faith its exercise.



### **Social Virtues**

The most beautiful trait in our Saint's character was his charity.

He was a Gentile who from his heart loved the religion, and even the language, of the favored Jews.

From their nation, also, the twelve familiar friends of Jesus were chosen. It would have been natural for the Gentile Luke, in his comparative obscurity among the Seventy, to envy them. Yet in his Gospel he "ever spares the Twelve." He alone says of the three most favored ones on the Mount of Transfiguration, "having *remained awake*," though they "were heavy with sleep," they saw Christ's glory (ix, 32, R. V. Marg.). He must, in honesty, confess that these three slept, when they should have watched, in Gethsemane, but he pleads that it was "for sorrow" (xxii, 45). In this remark he presses his acute knowledge of psychology into their service; and the same is true of his excuse for the eleven Apostles when the Risen Christ appeared to them on the first Easter Day: "They believed not *for joy*," he declares.

But it is his love for the Great Apostle of the Gentiles which is so exquisitely unselfish and sympathetic. "St. Paul," says Ramsay, "thinks imperially; he talks of provinces, and as he marches on his victorious course, he plants his footsteps in their capitals." St. Luke was the exact opposite of this, a plodding, careful, systematic man of details. Yet he made himself, as Harnack remarks, "the counterpart" of his companion.

His devotion to St. Paul became especially tender and strong during the Apostle's captivity. His modest "we" reveals the fact that he accompanied the prisoner on the military trireme which bore him to Rome. Now, there was but one way in which he could do this, and that was by taking the posi-

tion of St. Paul's slave. This he knew would involve menial duties, and might easily entail hardships and suffering, as well. And indeed his record of the tempestuous voyage is not without its memories of pain. Once he speaks of how he was impressed into service, to help haul in the waterlogged boat, though he was but a landsman, probably very sea-sick, and with soft hands, which the harsh rope would almost flay. Yet he says only: "we were able with difficulty to secure it" (Acts xxvii, 16, R. V.).

Through both imprisonments in Rome he remained steadfastly by St. Paul's side, even when all others forsook him. "Only Luke is with me," the Apostle wrote from his cell, during his second captivity (2 St. Tim. iv, 11, 16). Neither the shameful bonds of the aged Apostle, nor the extreme danger of fellowship with him, could deter his faithful friend until at last, as it seems, the "beloved physician" gave his life as the price of his fidelity.

We may also be called upon some day to give our lives for our brethren (1 St. John iii, 16). Let us train for that great sacrifice by exercising divine charity in little ways. Let us count our own fault as a "bearing-beam" in our eye, and our neighbor's as but a tiny mote in his (St. Luke vi, 42). Let us forbear to judge him until we have stood in his place and successfully borne his temptations. Above all, let us rather prefer to be drowned with a mill-stone about our neck than to make him stumble, though he be but a "little one" in the esteem of the world (St. Luke xvii, 2, R. V.).

## **The American Catholic Church for America**

Sir William Ramsay and Bishop Lightfoot, the greatest authorities on the Roman Empire, assign the following causes for its downfall : (1) The moral deterioration of the lower classes ; (2) disruption through conflicting national elements ; and (3) loss of purity in family life. Both these scholars, moreover, declare that the only possible remedy which could have saved the Empire was Christianity.

Now these same evil forces are at work in America to-day, and it is as true now as it was in the first four centuries that the Catholic Church is the one certain hope of the State.

For, as to the first of the above-mentioned evils, the Church is by nature suited to the poor. A year in the crowded alleys of South St. Louis convinced the writer that only her simple, authoritative teaching, together with her powerful sacraments, available at any moment, can meet the spiritual needs of the so-called "lower classes." Imagine a girl or woman who has grown up in the slums compelled to choose among three hundred sects ; or, again, thrown back upon herself with simply the advice to "be good," when she comes longing for the *assurance* that she is forgiven and for expert guidance amid the maze of her temptations !

In regard to the second of the three menaces to the State, it is the essential character of the American Church to unify our diverse nationalities and classes of citizens. Indeed she has proved her power in this regard. For there was every possi-

ble disrupting force at work to separate North and South, fifty years ago. The Ohio River, caused by an ancient glacier, made a natural break between the two sections, and this was accentuated by differences of soil, climate, and traditions. The Civil War, of course, enormously widened the separation. Sects, true to the schismatic principle, perpetuated and increased the breach by being themselves divided along the ever-deepening line of cleavage. But the essential constitution of the American Church, that is, its inclusiveness of all peoples, whatever their disparity in political characteristics, could not be destroyed by a glacier and a Civil War. At the General Convention in 1865, the Southern Bishops quietly took their seats. There was nothing emotional or dramatic about it, because it was the simple outcome of the Church's very life-principle. And this is but one notable instance of the great part she has done in levelling the sectional and racial barriers among "Americans."

Lastly, in her keeping are the most effective remedies against the deterioration of family life. Her confessional affords an opportunity to those who need counsel, or absolution. Her voice is lifted against the divorce evil the more strongly as sects and States relax their old-time firmness. Her marriage law is not perfect, we know, but it is at least the best in existence.

St. Luke shows us our Lord looking upon Jerusalem, and not only weeping, but sobbing aloud and wailing, because of the doom denounced

against the capital of His country (xix, 41, in the Greek). Patriotism, then, is Christ-like. Let us plant our flag beside the Cross in our churches, and let us pray for the conversion of America to the true Catholic Faith.



### **Cleaning House to Find the Lost Coin**

Characteristically, the Third Gospel arranges together the two parables of the stray sheep and the lost coin, so as to contrast them (xv, 3-10). In the former, the meaning seems to be that a soul has wandered from the Shepherd, because of its own native folly. It is lost in the mountains, afar from the fold. One would think that it must, therefore, represent the unevangelized Gentiles. But the woman has by her own carelessness dropped the coin out of her bosom, and it is still in the house. Thus she seems to typify the Church, and her lost drachma is the symbol of Christian souls which she has allowed to escape from her safe-keeping. But observe her eagerness and diligence, giving us an example of the love with which we are to strive for the restoration to us of our separated Christian brethren.

We must not expect, however, that we can sweep the whole house, and still leave all the *family* perfectly comfortable. "The search and finding were not without making some dust," says Bengel. We cannot gain the allegiance of non-Catholics until our own people have accepted all the teachings of their Prayer Book; and the unpleasant dust of

controversy may have to fly thick before this house-cleaning of ours will be finished.

Very likely, moreover, before we have found the coin, our house will look perfectly topsy-turvy to chance visitors. Archbishop Trench says aptly: "The charge against the Gospel is still the same, that it turns the world upside down." Some will want more ease than we offer. "The first requisite of a home is that it should be comfortable," they say, "so as to attract the men."

But at last we shall be consoled for all the discomfort of the family and all the strictures of outsiders. Indeed we shall rejoice and feast within our household of faith. For we shall have regained our precious coin.



### **Happiness, Our Lot as Christians**

Just to be a Christian is reason enough for being always full of joy. For happiness is something which can be predicated of none but people. We do not speak of a "happy" horse or dog. It is, therefore, a spiritual thing, not the result of luxurious living, which ultimately is simply a form of that which pleases the senses of the lower animals. And as Christians possess all spiritual blessings, they have by right all true happiness, even when they enjoy little temporal prosperity.

The Saints surely have been tried by every misfortune, yet who ever heard of one of them being melancholy? St. Basil was regarded by his contemporaries as by temperament especially prone to

gloom, and this was the more true that he suffered from a chronic disease of the liver. On one occasion he was brought before Modestus, the Arian prefect, and stripped to the waist. "I have about determined to have your liver torn out," thundered the tyrant. "I would be greatly obliged to you, sir," the Saint answered, smiling, "It has been a great annoyance to me where it is." Are we sharing the invincible gayety of the Saints? If not, it must be because we have never fully claimed God's Gift to us on Christmas.

Peace, moreover, the very peace of our Lord, belongs to us Christians, and this in ever deepening degrees. In the beginning, as we leave the font or our first confession, our Lord bids us, "Go *in* peace" (St. Luke ii, 29). But presently, as we grow in humility, penitence and love, we hear His dear dismissal to us, as once to the Blessed Magdalen, "Go *into* peace" (St. Luke viii, 48, literally translated). Finally, after we have served Him, or any soul for His sake, we go away "*with* peace," having received for our own a rich measure of that which we gave (Acts xv, 33, in the Greek).







## SPIRITUAL READINGS ON SAINT LUKE

### LENT

#### **Our Need of Greater Holiness**

St. Luke alone seems to have noticed when our Lord said: "I came to cast fire upon the earth" (xii, 49). The holy evangelist well knew what He meant. He had come to set the world on fire with burning zeal for entire sanctification. Bengel says: "This fire is not native to the earth." It came from Heaven.

Let us consider that we need perfect holiness. "unspotted from the world"! The punning name by which the pagans knew the early Christians was "Chrestians," or "Good folks." Out of sheer self-respect I must strive to live up to the standards of my glorious Christian ancestors, by which they gained even from their enemies a reputation for holiness.

But others also demand absolute self-consecration of me. Here again it is St. Luke who gives us a solemn warning from our Saviour: "Woe unto you," He said to the Jews, "for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not." His reference in that passage

was to the fact that graves were sometimes located in open fields. One who touched any such tomb was unclean seven days, and for this reason the Jews marked them out by whitewashing the stones laid over them. Now, our Lord meant that a person who is secretly unholy is like a grave in the field left unmarked so that men who walk over it know it not, and are unconsciously polluted. People come to us Christians openly, trustingly, unguardedly, and if we are not living a holy life, the very expressions on our face or the accents of our voice may injure them unawares.

But these considerations are as nothing compared with that of our duty to guard Christ dwelling in our hearts. Each one of us is a "habitation of God," a "temple of the living God" (Eph. ii, 22; 2 Cor. vi, 16). Let us therefore glorify God in our body, for it is God's (1 Cor. vi, 20).



### **Our Need of Spiritual Life**

In that parable of our Lord wherein He compares the merely formal Christian to savorless salt, He gives us a powerful incentive to keep Lent devoutly. For he points out that any one of us who lacks genuine piety is like the spoilt salt, which, being suitable neither as food nor as fertilizer, was then, as now, used to pave the streets of the Eastern cities. Evidently we may preserve an external appearance of Christianity, by which we will help others to find the way to Heaven, while we ourselves are stationary. Our whole Church life, albeit

much esteemed by our fellow-members, may have no other value than to pave the road for homeward-bound pilgrims.

But, if we must seek holiness for our own salvation, we shall need it just as truly if we would edify those whose lives touch our own. Our own spiritual development is of vital importance. This truth appears with great clearness from the care which our Lord took in training His Apostles. For He wrought His miracles primarily to increase their own faith, rather than for the conversion of others. When He said (to combine the three Gospel accounts of the passage): "Some of you shall not taste of death until you have seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom, with power," He referred to His Transfiguration, which in all three Gospels immediately followed this saying. Yet that all-important revelation of Himself in the radiance of His heavenly majesty, between the two glorified saints, was given to but three persons out of all the world. It was a foretaste of the Second Advent, of which they were not even permitted to speak, until our Lord had risen from the grave (St. Mark ix, 9). In the same way He wills to grant us, during this Lent, some new vision of His glory and power, so that, after Easter, we may communicate it to other souls.

The first of all the Beatitudes, is that which was addressed to the Blessed Virgin: "Blessed is she who believed," and this blessing upon her was God's use of her to bring forth a Saviour to the world. How wonderful if I might be the medium

through which He would shine forth upon those around me! Yet this is His reward for a good Lent. "I will bless thee," He promises, "and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. xii, 2).



### **Our Need of Reflection**

Among all the many precious passages from our Lord's ministry preserved to us by the Third Gospel none is more full of teaching than that which describes the hospitable activity of Martha, and the receptive thoughtfulness of Mary at Jesus' Feet (x, 38-42). Probably Christ was seated in a little bower of branches, for it was the Feast of Tabernacles, and Mary sat looking up into His Face and drinking in His instruction. "Martha," says St. Augustine, "was troubled how she might feed the Lord, Mary was anxious to be fed by Him." It is right for us, during these sacred Forty Days, to adopt her "better part" of reflecting upon Divine truth and receiving it.

Pascal points out to us that thought is among the noblest of man's faculties. Its exercise makes any one of us superior to the entire material world. Our physical life may be destroyed by the tiniest of natural forces, but even should the whole physical universe overwhelm us we should be greater than the universe, for we should *know* that we were dying, whereas the universe would be unconscious of its victory. Yet how many whole days of our life pass without any really deep thought about truth, especially that perfect Truth, which is God!

Our mind, indeed, was created for the very purpose of knowing God. If we need a proof of this, apart from the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the Catholic Church, we find it in the fact that men of all ages who have thought deeply have come in the end to seek God. No philosopher of any note, from the Greeks to Mr. H. G. Wells, has been willing to die without crowning his system with a theology.

But we Christians enjoy tremendous advantages over those who have to grope blindly after God. Surely we ought to develop the habit of reflection upon Him in Whom is all wisdom. As we look forward to our precious time of Lenten retirement, let us beseech our God to open our eyes, that we may see the wondrous things of His law (Psalm cxix, 18).



### **Our Need of Fleeing the World**

Saint Elizabeth, as our beloved Evangelist relates, went into Retreat for five months, after she learned that she was to bring forth the Forerunner of Christ (i, 24). Surely this voluntary retirement was for no other purpose than to prepare herself for so lofty an office. And she is an example to us, who every one must bring forth our Lord's "Forerunner."

For we need to retire from the world, during Lent, in order to gain a hearty hatred of worldliness. The Greek word for "Church" (*ekklesia*) means "called out,"—that is separated from the indiffer-

ent or godless millions—into fellowship with our Lord. Nor can we forget what the unbelieving world inflicted upon Him. His own native village, to which He had gone for sympathy and love, cast Him forth and led Him to a precipice that He might be thrown down headlong (St. Luke iv, 29). This summary action, condemning Him without a trial, and attempting to execute Him immediately, was called among the Jews the “rebel’s beating.” Let us stand by the side of this dear Rebel against the wickedness of the world.

We will rejoice, also, in enduring some hardship in the company of our Master. It was luxury and self-indulgence which crucified Him. The whole divine tragedy of His rejection by man is symbolized in that episode of the trial scene when the High Priest rent his rich garments. For he tore his two “tunics” (St. Mark xiv, 63, in the Greek) in his hypocritical pretence of indignation at our Lord’s divine claim. The rule of a devout Jew forbade him to wear the under tunic, made no doubt of the finest and softest linen, on the ground that it was effeminate. Thus he gave evidence of the evil passions which, in fact, were condemning Jesus to death. During these Forty Days let us mortify our Lord’s tormentors and murderers within ourselves.



### **Our Lord’s Temptations**

There is no New Testament writer, it seems, who so draws consolation and encouragement for himself, and us, out of our Lord’s temptations, as does

St. Luke. It is he who adds to the narrative of the Forty Days on the Mount the significant note: "And when the devil had completed every [kind of] temptation, he departed from Him until a [convenient] season" (St. Luke iv, 13; cp. R. V. Marg.). How unspeakably encouraging it is to realize that Satan persecuted our Lord with his evil suggestions all His life long, only discontinuing, after a defeat, until he had what seemed to be a better chance. To an earnest Christian there is no keener suffering than this, but we know that our Saviour has experienced it to the full, since He "was in all points tempted like as we are," so that He could be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. iv, 15).

"The evil one," says Dr. Plummer, "seems to have accumulated attacks at the beginning and end [of Christ's ministry]. In the wilderness he employed the attractiveness of painless glory and success; in the garden he tried the dread of suffering and failure. All human temptation takes place through the instrumentality of pleasure or pain."

But Satan also often prompted Christ to give up His work under the continued strain of hardships and disappointments it entailed. It is these trials to which He refers, when He says to His disciples throughout all the Christian ages: "Ye are they which have continued [loyally] with Me in My temptations; and I appoint unto you a Kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me" (St. Luke xxii, 28 f., R.V.). If ever we feel like abandoning the vocation which we have received from God,

because it is a continued burden, full of failures, let us remember that Jesus has trod that path also before us.



### Our Temptations

In company with other sacred writers, our saintly guide uses a Greek word for temptation, which indicates exactly what it is. He speaks of it under the figure of the upright bait-stick in a trap (e. g. xvii, 1 ff., in the Greek). We always see this lure of the devil if we are keeping our spiritual eyes open by the examination of our conscience. "We are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. ii, 11). Is it not encouraging to know that our arch-enemy can never beguile or deceive us into sin, save through our unfaithfulness?

It is this restraint imposed upon the tempter, which is described as the binding of Satan in St. Luke (xi, 21 ff.) and in the Book of Revelation (xx, 3). Let us study the passage in the Third Gospel, for this will throw much light upon the controverted teaching of St. John. Our Lord tells us that the devil is the 'strong man fully armed,' keeping 'his own castle yard.' But He, our Saviour, has by His Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection, stormed Satan's fortress, *bound* him, taken away his panoply, and 'dispersed his spoils,' that is, the angels he had seduced in his fall. It is plain, therefore, that the binding of the arch-fiend has been accomplished long since. It was fully done, "very early" on the first Easter morn. We are now living in the mil-



lennium. Our Lord is reigning among us, and our implacable foe is, so far as his own power goes, harmless.

It is unchristian, therefore, to fear the devil. Let us make our boast in our Lord, sincerely believing that inspired promise of the Psalmist: "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler; He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust."



### **Ways to Repel Satan**

Jesus is ever the triumphant conqueror of our spiritual foe; but we have to use His power, if we would be victorious with Him.

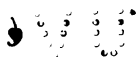
If, for one thing, when we perceive the approach of Satan, we make the sign of the cross, or even think of Christ crucified, the tempter will flee from us. Christians throughout all the centuries since Jesus died upon the cross have used the sign of the cross in this way, and none who used it aright ever yet failed to receive entire protection.

Then we ought to invoke the Holy Spirit, especially if the temptation is against the Faith. St. Luke is unique in describing this Comforter of Christians as the "Finger of God" (xi, 20). With but a touch of His Finger in our hearts, our Lord can repel our adversaries.

To mention only one more of the weapons which are provided us in the armory of the Church, we shall find great strength in recollecting our relation to God. A certain woman who had gained this

conception in a mission afterwards found herself greatly tempted to impatience because the thread kept slipping out of her needle. Then she thought of her own will as the thread and of God's love as the needle. He was continually trying to lay hold of her by His love and make her serve some useful purpose. But, just as the thread kept coming out of the needle's eye, so she was forever falling away from His love. "I was no longer impatient after that," she remarked of the experience afterwards.

With so many powerful means of defence, we can afford to despise Satan, even though we recognize our own utter weakness. Often it will rid us of his insolent advances, if we scornfully repel him and give him no further thought, provided only that at the same time we take refuge in the fellowship of our Saviour.



### Examination of Conscience

What is conscience? It is the *mind* perceiving and applying the moral law. It is not a *feeling*, or a *special sense*, but our *reason* telling us what is right and what is wrong.

The identity of conscience with mind appears from this, among other proofs, that where there is a clear conscience, discerning moral truth readily, the mind is correspondingly clear in recognizing other kinds of truth. Even a young child, illuminated by Christian grace, has been found quite able to see that God foreknew the sin of Adam, but did

not will it. An agnostic psychologist, on the other hand, confesses himself unable to understand how God can foreknow and yet not predetermine everything which happens. The simple Christian lad perceived truth which was too difficult for the mind of a great non-Christian professor. Moreover, the intellect must be trained, as conscience, to determine the moral law, if it is ever to know Perfect Truth, which is God. We see, therefore, the very great importance of examining our conscience, and of washing away in the precious Blood all that we find defiling it.

St. Luke, in his version of the parable about the wise house-builder, indicates to us that this self-examination is to go deep into our own weakness (vi, 48, R.V.). "He digged and went deep," our Lord says, "and laid a foundation upon the rock." Both he and his unwise neighbor built by the water-course, and therefore in the sand of the beach. But the other structure had no other foundation except the shifting surface, and therefore when a spring storm burst upon it, "it fell in," whereas the house with the rock foundation withstood the violence of the elements. The lesson for us is plain. We are to know ourselves so well that we will not rest the edifice of our spiritual life upon the unstable sand of our own strength. We will resolutely dig deep until we have found that Rock, which is Christ, and have built our lives upon Him.



### **Some Principles of Self-Examination**

Our saintly Teacher, in one place, relates that Jesus exorcised a demoniac in a synagogue (iv, 33). It is remarkable that this unfortunate should have been admitted to worship with the Jewish congregation, since he was considered unclean. We understand, therefore, that the demons which possessed him must have been quiet for a long while, so that he was supposed to be free from them. But when their victim brought them into the presence of our Lord, they could not help precipitating a crisis. Whereupon Jesus cast them out. In the same way, Satan's hold upon us relaxes, and he flees from us when we place ourselves in the presence of Christ. It is important, therefore, to preface our self-examination by recollecting that our Divine Lord, as well as we ourselves, will be looking into our souls.

Let us be absolutely honest with Him. Once, after warning His hearers against hypocrisy, He turned away from the unconverted Jews and said to His disciples, "*But, I say unto you, My friends,*"—and went on to give an instruction on an entirely different subject (St. Luke xii, 1-4). Evidently He thought it unnecessary to warn His friends at length against hypocrisy. He took it for granted that they at least would be open and frank with Him.

We must make an especially careful examination of ourselves as to our principal fault. To teach us this painful duty, our Lord employs one of His vivid analogues. He refers to it as being the "bearing-beam" in our spiritual eye (St. Luke vi, 41 f.),

implying in what He says about it that it may be glaringly obvious to everybody else, and yet, strange to say, invisible to ourselves. Our fundamental vice, moreover, spoils our spiritual vision, as one of the huge foundation timbers of a house would destroy our physical vision, if it could be really thrust into our eye. Yet it will require all our courage and resolution to persevere in our struggle to discover it and pluck it from our soul.



### **Practice of the Presence of Christ**

There is a series of passages both in the Old Testament prophecies and in the Gospels where we are told that vast convulsions of nature will accompany the manifestation of God before the eyes of men. Now many people in our day think that the Holy Scriptures have given us in these texts certain premonitory signs whereby we may know when the Judge is to come. But the cataclysms which will occur when Christ appears on earth are not intended to preface that event as marks whereby we may know beforehand when our Lord's Second Advent is near. For He makes it abundantly clear that no man can possibly foretell that time. For example, He says He will come as a "thief in the night" (St. Luke xii, 39 f.). What, then, is the purpose of such passages as St. Luke xxi, 25 to 36, where the terrible phenomena of the Second Advent are described by Christ? They are intended to teach us what is "the response of the creature to

the presence of the Creator." Then will even physical nature greet its Lord with trembling fear, and the godless will then at last realize His Majesty with awe and dread. Thus Holy Writ seeks to teach us the great reverence which is due to the Divine Presence. We Christians ought not to wait until heart-searching fear seizes upon us at the visible appearing of our Judge. Let the cataclysms be *now* in our hearts and lives as we recollect the presence of Him who is "a consuming fire."

For if we thus realize, however dimly, the omnipresence of God, and strive to respond to it by holy fear, we need not fear the Second Advent of our Lord. Indeed one who stood upon the brink of death, and before whose eyes Christ would soon be manifested, tells us that we ought to "*love* His appearing" (2 Tim. iv, 8). And St. Luke greatly strengthens this conception of the Christian attitude towards our Saviour's coming by giving us those most encouraging words of His: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (xxi, 28). The cross will appear in the Eastern sky; but we will not fear it. We have always loved it and made the sign of it reverently upon ourselves countless times. Best of all, we have used it habitually in temptation. And Christ! shall we fear Him? Never! We shall open our arms to Him and He will open His to us and will give us the kiss of peace.



**Love of Jesus is Our Positive Righteousness**

In view of all our spiritual helps, and the protection of our Lord and His Holy Angels, it ought not to surprise us if our daily examination sometimes reveals no matter for repentance. On such occasions we ought to question ourselves as to how often and how truly we have loved our Lord during the day. For the great, positive purpose of our spiritual life is to love our Saviour, and although we have been kept free from sin, this will have been negative goodness unless we shall have exercised divine charity toward Him.

Indeed there is positive danger in being merely faultless. Our Lord makes this certain by His parable of the man with the clean, but empty, soul (St. Luke xi, 24-26). The man had been possessed, but through his repentance, rather than through exorcism, the demon had "gone forth" from him. His soul was "swept clean and garnished,"—that is purified from sin and also adorned with virtues, but was empty of love. Therefore the former infernal tenant of it returned to his house and brought with him "seven other demons more wicked than himself," with the purpose of making an utter wreck of the unhappy victim's spiritual life.

If, therefore, we would be saved, if we would fulfil the very purpose of our creation, if, finally, we would attain to perfection in the speediest, as well as the most delightful, way, we need only love Jesus more and more.

### Habitual Penitence

Probably no one of our Lord's shorter parables is so fraught with instruction about the true Christian spirit as that of the Pharisee and the publican. How much do we owe, then, to St. Luke for giving it to us (xviii, 10-14)! It well displays his graphic touch. Indeed he is very likely reporting an actual occurrence which our Lord and His disciples witnessed in the Temple. "The publican," he says, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but continually smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me *the sinner*'" (R.V. Marg.). Out of all the evil men then living on earth, or, as it would seem, above all the wicked souls which from the beginning of the world had cursed it by their lives, he thought of himself as the chief.

Yet he was but a Jew, with only the Old Testament to enlighten his conscience and touch his heart. He knew about the personal spirit of evil, the enemy of God and of his own soul, and he knew that he had consented to the temptation of the adversary in the very presence of his Maker and his Lord. But a Christian understands much more than this concerning the malice of sin. He knows that his offences were so many blows at the love of God which had come in the Person of Jesus Christ to seek him out and to save him. Our Lord may justly complain of each one of us: "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of My Bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me."



Not for our condemnation, however, does He by the lips of the psalmist speak this tender reproach. He desires to awaken in us life-long penitence, that so He may insure our eternal salvation. This thought has been quite wonderfully expressed for us by a modern poet:

“Once, staggering blindly on the brink of hell,  
Above the everlasting fire-flood’s awful roar,  
God threw His heart before my feet,  
And, stumbling o’er that obstacle divine,  
I into Heaven fell.”

But St. Luke has something still more wonderful to tell us about habitual penitence. He relates that when our Lord rode into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday, the multitude cried out: “Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.” Through the Messiah, man is reconciled to God, and this brings to Heaven itself greater glory and a deeper peace.

Shall I not, then, place myself beside the publican? For the sake of my own salvation and the happiness of my Lord and the blessed company of Heaven, I will confess myself to be *the* sinner.



### **The Prodigal Son**

That which is, perhaps, the tenderest of all the parables that our Lord spoke is found in the Third Gospel alone. The story of the father welcoming back, with every sign of love, the travel-stained, ragged pauper, who was, nevertheless, still his son,

represents to us so perfectly God's mercy towards the converted sinner, that it is rightly spoken of as "the Gospel in the Gospel." Let us try to gain some helpful suggestions from this masterpiece of the sacred painter (xv, 11-32).

The younger son was entitled to a third of his father's estate, and might receive it before his father's death, if the latter chose to give it to him. His sin lay in the fact that, having gathered it together, he then scattered it abroad. When all was spent, a famine came upon that "far country" to which he had gone; for "the working of Providence is manifested in coincidences," so that an apparently accidental disaster often occurs to one who has been following a course of reckless error. Now, in the time of his destitution, the prodigal has the bitter experience of discovering that he has made no friends by his lavish extravagance, so that he is forced to become *swineherd* to a *heathen*, a doubly humiliating fall into the lowest depths of disgrace. But there is a nemesis worse than this attending upon him. His own bad mental habits of self-indulgence persist. His inflamed appetite must be sated. He seeks therefore to gorge himself on the locust pods, which in Palestine have always constituted a coarse food for man as well as animals. But, for his discipline, the good God will allow him to be given no more of these than the scant measure he earns. Thus, at last, he 'comes to himself' and determines that he will arise and go to his father, confess his faults and beg to be admitted to his home, no longer as a son, but as a slave.

Let us apply this to ourselves. Our heavenly Father has not only made us His sons, through His gift of sanctifying grace; He has made us also "joint-heirs with Christ" in that spiritual happiness which is really the inheritance of the perfected saints. But with what profligate wickedness do we cast it all away by mortal sin, just as if we had gathered our priceless wealth in our arms and with a single gesture showered it upon fawning demons. Then, when they have degraded us before our Father and our own conscience, how do those false friends mock our famished souls! How, worst of all, the habit of sin continues to bind us, so that we think of ourselves as slaves, rather than as children of our Father's household.

But the moment we come to ourselves, through the drawing of divine love, and arise from our self-chosen place with the swine, at once we can say, like the penitent prodigal, "I will go to my [own] Father." Let us remember, however, that the prodigal was still sorry, and confessed, after his father had forgiven him (*v.* 21). Let our penitence, like his, be so generous that it continues deep and sincere even after we have received absolution.



### **God's Love for Penitents**

While the prodigal was yet a great way off, the father saw him, because he had never ceased to watch for the returning figure of his son, and knew him under his rags, even in the far distance. Immediately he ran to the boy, fell on his neck, and

kissed him again and again. Evidently he was deeply moved with pity and tender love. Moreover, he actually bestowed honor upon the penitent lad, clothing him with the best robe, and putting the *signet* ring upon his finger. So long as the young man was barefoot he appeared like a slave, therefore he must be shod as became a son of the house. Finally, the father ordered that the one fatted calf, kept for some special occasion, be made the victim of a sacrifice of thanksgiving (as the Greek indicates), to be followed by a feast. "It is our bounden duty to feast and be glad," the father declared (cp. v. 32, in the Greek). No occasion could be so great as this, for his son had been dead and was alive again; he had been lost and was found.

By every one of these vivid details our Lord seeks to bring out more and more convincingly the almost incredible love of God for a penitent. Our Father still longs after us even in the soiled rags of that righteousness which once whole and perfect He gave us at our baptism. Let us but turn to Him and give Him His opportunity. He will come while we are a great way off, with the best robe of fresh holiness, the ring of sonship, and the shoes of the Gospel of Peace. All Heaven will be *en fête*, for on our Lord's face will be joy such as the ninety and nine just persons never see there, except when a sinner repents.

It is all so wellnigh impossible, that, to believe in this divine charity, we need to see it at work in an individual soul. We cannot find the full details

of St. Peter's fall in any other Gospel except the Second (xiv, 68-72), which was dominated by his influence. But there it appears that he went from depth to depth of disloyalty, in his three denials of Christ. First, he declared that he knew not what the maid was saying. Then he insisted that he was not one of Christ's disciples. Finally, he swore that he did not even know the Man, at the same time invoking a curse upon himself if he did. But the answer of God to this last was no curse. It was a look of mingled sorrow and love on the face of Jesus, sorrow for Peter's sin and love for Peter. The Apostle says that he wept a long time when he saw that gaze. But his repentance might have spent itself in tears, except that Christ had, the night before, in the Upper Room, put into his mind the assurance that he could regain the height from which he was then about to fall. "I tell thee, Peter," He had said, "the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." This was the first time since the Great Confession that our Lord had called him by that proud name, which signified that he was a "stone-man." How it would remind Peter of his first fervor and make him resolve to regain and perfect it!

So does the pleading love of God revive in us, after a fall, some memory, perhaps that of our fervor at our First Communion, that we may be inspired with new hope, and cast ourselves once more into the everlasting arms which are ever wide open to receive us.

### Self-Righteousness

Let us review, as briefly as possible, for it is not an edifying picture, the character of the prodigal's elder brother. It will show what a Christian may be, if he lacks the realization of his own sins, and penitence for them.

When the younger son returned, his brother was out in the field, engaged in hard duty-doing, for he was a legalist. "Lo! These many years do I serve thee," he boasted to his father, "neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." He could have had a feast on request, as his father reminded him, saying, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." But the pride he took in scrupulous righteousness and exact obedience had excluded the spirit of merry-making. His unloving spirit comes out clearly in the way he believes the worst of his younger brother. "This precious son of thine," he reproaches his father, as we may paraphrase his scornful words, "has devoured *thy* living *with sinners*." Yet the squandered wealth was the boy's own inheritance, and the elder brother did not know that he had been guilty of any other fault than prodigality.

And how completely he fails even to notice his father's love for him, although it was evidently as great for him as for his brother! If the father "ran" to meet the one, he "went out" to the other and "entreated him," addressing him with the affectionate title "Boy," or "Child." But the same hard pride, which had colored his view of his

brother's conduct and shut out the spirit of feasting from his life, made him oblivious to this paternal tenderness.

The application to ourselves is very plain. Self-righteousness robs us of all true joy. It makes us censorious judges of our brethren. It fills us with such satisfaction with ourselves that we never feel the need, nor the unspeakable joy, of being loved by God. Let us then, by deep, habitual penitence set the heavenly choirs singing. The refrain is antiphonal. God presents: "This My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found," and the holy saints respond: "This our brother was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (*vv.* 24 and 32).



### **Accepting Punishment From God**

The spiritual value of the punishment for our sins, when it is accepted and willingly borne, is strikingly illustrated by the case of St. Paul's fellow-laborer, Sosthenes.

This man is first introduced to us in the Acts of the Apostles (xviii, 5-17), under the following circumstances. When the Jews of Corinth rejected the Gospel, St. Paul established himself in that city next door to their synagogue and there taught the Christian Faith. Furthermore, he gained over Crispus, the ruler of the Jewish congregation. Then, in great vexation, no doubt, the Jews chose another leader, Sosthenes. Next, they prosecuted St. Paul before Gallio, the Roman proconsul, a

nobleman, the brother of Seneca, and uncle of the poet Lucan. Probably no man would have had less patience with them than he, for he must have been uncomfortable enough already, with the *ennui* of spending two years at Corinth, before he was eligible for preferment at Rome, without tiring himself over Jewish subtleties. So, he hardly heard the indictment of St. Paul, before he snubbed the complainants severely and had his officers clear the court of them. Poor Sosthenes, however, was caught by the Greeks, who hated all Jews, and rightly guessed that he was a leader, and was beaten then and there, while Gallio either affected not to see or simply remarked that it was none of his business.

But this beating was very profitable, it seems, to Sosthenes' soul. Probably he already felt, down in his heart, that St. Paul was being unjustly treated by the synagogue, and the very effort he had made to convict the Apostle of a crime before a heathen, and so an unprejudiced, tribunal, exposed to him plainly the falsity of the charge. Most of all, his public chastisement, coming like a judgment of God upon him for his complicity in the persecution of an innocent man, must have disgusted him heartily with his own share in the matter.

At all events, his conversion seems quite certainly to have followed soon after the humiliation and suffering of that afternoon. St. Paul wrote, not long after, to the Christians of this same city, saying, "Paul and *Sosthenes our brother*, unto the Church of God, which is in Corinth, grace to you and peace



from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Evidently this Sosthenes was well known to the Corinthians, and he had become St. Paul's beloved fellow-laborer. A very old tradition identifies him with that ruler of the synagogue, whose public flagellation St. Luke thought important enough to record in the Acts.

The episode provides us a remarkable illustration of this great truth, that even the penalty of our sins is visited upon us by God, not as His just vengeance, but rather for the conversion of our souls. Thus we say to Him in the Psalms: "Thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled," and "Before I was troubled I went wrong, but now have I kept Thy word."



### **Self-Discipline**

In the conditions of discipleship which our Lord imposed upon all His followers, St. Luke alone recalls for us one very significant word. His version of that all-important saying is this: "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow Me." Except for the Third Gospel we might have thought that we must wait for the opportunity of martyrdom, before we could show our worthiness to bear the proud title of Christians. But our saintly instructor makes it abundantly plain that our cross is to consist of little *daily* austerities and acts of self-control.

We can see how loyalty to our Lord may depend upon the self-discipline we have practised in some small matter, if we study the fall of St. Peter. That Apostle seems to ascribe his denials of Christ to the fact that he refused to deny himself. For had he not been "sitting with the officers, and warming himself in the light of the fire" (St. Mark xiv, 54, R.V.), he would not have been exposed to a temptation which he should have known from Christ's warning (St. Luke xxii, 34) would be too great for him. Bengel truly remarks upon this episode: "Often while we care for the body, the soul is neglected."

Nor is that austerity which breeds faithfulness to our Saviour confined to religious houses. The Church enjoins upon all her children regular abstinence on Fridays and during such holy seasons as this of Lent. And some small, but effective, regular self-denial will be found consistent with any secular employment. The writer knows of a society woman who at every dinner-party gives a few seconds to silent, secret, recollection of our Lord's presence in her heart. Is it probable that the lips of one who practices even such a tiny austerity as this will afterward be disloyal to Jesus?

Gladly, for the sake of being loyal to Him Who was crucified for me, I will do myself some little daily despite. I will sacrifice unto my Lord with the voice of thanksgiving.



### **Doing Penance**

There is a mediæval sound about this title, but in fact the spirit of making reparation to God for our evil deeds by imposing penalties upon ourselves, is at least as old as the Church itself. In its perfection it is shown by St. Paul, who did penance for his sins in the most excellent of all ways, that is by performing good works of the opposite nature. If we will follow his example faithfully and perseveringly, we can afford to forego corporal austerities, except such as the Church especially enjoins upon us.

“Saul laid waste the Church,” truthful St. Luke records (Acts viii, 3, R.V.). And his reference is to that wild boar out of the wood which had wasted the ancient Garden of God (Psalms lxxx, 13). But if the great Apostle was, before his conversion, a wild beast ravaging Christ’s heritage, he spent the thirty years of his life after he became a Christian “planting” many thousand for one he had uprooted (1 Cor. iii, 6).

Again, he tells us that he “sacked the Church of God,” making havoc of it as the lawless soldiery of the time ruthlessly plundered a captured city (Gal. i, 13, in the Greek). Now, however, he beggared himself, counting all his rich inheritance as so much refuse, for the sake of Christ’s mystical Body, the Church (Phil. iii, 8).

Finally, if we gather together the other expressions of his penitence, we find him condemning himself as having been a blasphemer of Jesus, and

a persecutor and a wantonly insolent oppressor of Christ's disciples (1 St. Tim. i, 13). He has, as it were, breathed into his heart the very atmosphere of threatenings and of the slaughter of Christ's elect, being "exceedingly mad" against them (Acts ix, 1; xxvi, 11). But for his penance he takes all the Churches daily upon his heart, and burns and suffers with every single Christian (2 Cor. xi, 28 f.).

Surely St. Paul thus teaches us a most evangelical kind of penance! Suppose, for example, that those of us who are tempted to impatience should diligently cultivate the opposite virtue, or if, say, we are talking too much, or "unadvisedly,"—and who does not fail at this point?—and we should strive for silence and charity in speech, what other satisfaction for our sins could be more perfect than this, for the good of our own souls and the consolation of our wounded Saviour?



### **The Many Values of Suffering**

Sir William Ramsay says that St. Luke studiously suppresses his personal feelings and views throughout the Acts. Especially, he never uses his significant "we" except where it is necessary to show he was in St. Paul's company at that time. When, therefore, we find his little pronoun in a context where it is not meant to indicate his presence, we must be right in thinking that there is some potent and interesting reason for this divergence from the impersonal tone found elsewhere. "They returned to Lystra, and Iconium and Antioch," so runs the

narrative, "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that *we* must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts xiv, 22). The apparent explanation is that St. Luke wrote this passage "during a time of special persecution from which he was a sufferer." An independent line of proof, also, shows that the Book of Acts was written at Rome, under one of the persecuting emperors. It was suffering, then, which introduced this unwonted touch of personal experience and understanding and sympathy into St. Luke's historical record. And it is as true for us as for him that affliction breeds in Christians a great love and pity for others who suffer.

Our Saint knew also that it gives us a precious opportunity to bear something for the sake of the Son of Man. For he had heard Christ teach this, and declare that the greatest disgrace and ignominy,—these being perhaps the keenest kinds of suffering,—are blessed when endured out of love for Him. "Blessed are ye," our Lord said, "when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake." Moreover, the solemn meaning of this saying is deepened if we understand that the Greek word translated "separate" means literally to "mark off with a boundary" and refers to Jewish excommunication, which prohibited the excommunicated person from coming within four cubits of anyone. Also, when He speaks of our name being cast out as evil, He uses the terms familiar among the Greeks

for hissing an actor off the stage. Evidently, then, ostracism and approbrium, which we incur by reason of our Christian calling, are blessings which we should welcome with open arms.

These are but two out of a great number of advantages which suffering has for faithful Christians. St. Paul seeks to group them all under the conception that through pain, lovingly borne, we become sharers of our Saviour's Passion. For where it is said of the thieves that they "were crucified-with" Christ (St. Matt. xxvii, 44), a single, unusual, Greek verb is used. And St. Paul applies this to us saying that our old man is "crucified-with" Jesus. In his view, therefore, each one of us is in the place of the good thief crucified at our Lord's right hand. Surely, no other place could be so blessed. For while it is a position of suffering, it is also that of sharing in our Saviour's Kingdom of loving power.



### **Loving Obedience and Legalism**

Our beloved Painter Saint has set in juxtaposition, and in vivid contrast, two rich men, who in opposite ways sought to become disciples of Christ (St. Luke xviii and xix).

The Rich Young Man was a legalist. He considered that he had kept the commandments strictly from his youth. Therefore he came to Christ demanding something hard to do, and fully confident that he could do it. But when the call came to give up all and follow our Lord, he failed, because the courage to do this could spring only from love.

Zacchæus, on the other hand, hoped for no more than a glimpse of the Man Who cared for publicans and sinners. But to get this, he forgot his dignity as tax commissioner and climbed up into a tree like any school-boy. Our Lord loved him for it and graciously offered to become his Guest, thus asking hospitality for Himself for the only time in His earthly ministry, so far as we know. While the Rich Young Man came self-confidently to Him, it was He who came to humble Zacchæus. Thereupon the publican voluntarily gave one-half of what he possessed to the poor, and in reparation for all he had extorted he restored fourfold. That was the satisfaction exacted from a destructive plunderer. The legalist had refused to give up his riches, even after our Lord had counselled him to do so, but Zacchæus of his own accord beggared himself. So great is the difference love makes in our obedience. Christ's reward to him was salvation, not only for himself, but for his entire household.

It is thought that it was on this occasion our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Who, then, can measure the blessedness of giving one's whole will—oneself, indeed—to God in loving obedience? It must be greater than that of all the eight beatitudes together, since the promise attached to them is of something we shall receive, whereas we have Christ's word that the blessedness of giving is greater. Indeed in loving self-surrender we share that blessedness of God which He derives from the perpetual flowing out of His will in love.

### **Our Loving Obedience Rejoices Christ**

A poor widow once gave great comfort to our Saviour by an action which cost her only a small fraction of a penny. It was she who put into the Temple treasury the two mites, when this was all she had in the world (St. Luke xxi, 1-4). It was against the Jewish law for her to put in less than two mites, but she need not have given anything, since her's was a freewill offering. In the same way, if we give ourselves to God at all, we must give Him all our "living."

The context of the episode shows us what is the true inspiration to make this holocaust of our wills. Our Lord had become wearied out with the contradiction and hypocrisy of the Jews. But when His glance caught the action of the poor widow, He "looked up" (*v.* 1) as if He derived fresh courage from her act of whole-hearted generosity with God. Let us be a comfort to Christ amid the countless millions of rebellious, or dissembling, human wills.

Yet this we can never be, unless we give ourselves freely to Him. He holds four hundred thousand million worlds in His hand and they must obey His will, absolutely; but He has so made us that He must have our consent before He can claim our hearts.



### **Blind Obedience**

As we study St. Paul's life, we discover more and more his great love for his own people. Especially



in the beginning of his ministry it is evident that he earnestly hoped to be allowed to work among them at Jerusalem. Indeed his first training in blind obedience to Christ came from following His direction to preach among the Gentiles, when he himself could not at all see the wisdom of this course.

After the great Apostle had ministered in Jerusalem during the famine, he knew that his popularity among the people was great. His conversion to Christianity *must*, he thought, be a convenient and conclusive argument to the Jews. Had he not been a pupil of Gamaliel? Was he not a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee? Had he not persecuted Christians unto death? Surely his own people must believe in the divine power of a religion which could win over such as he. Then, in vision, in the Temple, came the order from Christ: "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will *not* receive *of thee* testimony concerning Me." St. Paul ventured to argue about it: He had been so ardent a Jew, imprisoning and beating Christians and assisting prominently at the martyrdom of St. Stephen. His preaching would be effective with the people of Jerusalem, so he seems to have reasoned, because they would know that something real and great must have happened to convert him. Thus he would get them to believe in the vision of His risen Lord on the road to Damascus. But the only answer he received from Jesus was the command: "Depart! for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts xxii, 17-21).

In obedience to that mandate he left Jerusalem, but when he got as far as Antioch he again sought guidance. Thereupon the Holy Ghost set him apart once more for work among the Gentiles (Acts xiii, 3 f.).

But he did not even yet yield fully to the hard obedience laid upon him, until the day he received such marvelous power over Elymas, the sorcerer, for the conversion of the Roman governor. The unquestionable evidence of Christ's favor which was afforded him in this contest with the powers of evil for the soul of the Gentile proconsul convinced him beyond further doubt that he was indeed called to be the Apostle of the heathen world. Then, at last, he assumed the name "Paulus," given him long before as the mark of his Roman citizenship, and emerged from his Jewish narrowness to be in very truth a citizen of the Empire which henceforth he would strive to win for Christ (Acts xiii, 4-12).

In some such way as this, our Lord may convince us by accumulation of evidence,—by the words of Holy Scripture, perhaps, or by spiritual direction, that He is laying upon us a hard obedience. We are asked to believe a doctrine, or to perform a service, or to submit to suffering, entirely different from what we would of ourselves believe, or do, or suffer. At any such time let us realize that we have an opportunity to render "blind" obedience to Jesus, honoring Him the more by trusting implicitly to His love and wisdom when we "cannot see why."



### **Silent Obedience**

It is generally true to say that we double the value, to ourselves and to our Lord, of obedience, when we perform it in silence and obscurity.

St. Luke teaches us this in the form of quiet resignation to God's will, by the example of Lazarus the poor, leprous beggar (xvi, 19 ff.). This servant of God often hungered and was glad to share the food of the dogs, yet he never murmured about the inequality of Providence, or the selfishness of Dives, at whose gate he lay. When he had attained to Abraham's Bosom he was equally silent about the changed relation between himself and the rich man, not exulting, nor protesting, against crossing the "great gulf fixed" to touch the other's tongue with water, nor objecting to go back to the world on an errand for Dives. And evidently this quiet willingness of Lazarus to take what his Lord sent him was very pleasing to God, for He rewarded it with eternal life (cp. *v.* 25).

Silent obedience is shown us, as exercised in a very different sphere, in the case of St. Philip the Deacon. After the martyrdom of St. Stephen, he was really the leader among the Christians scattered and dispersed in Palestine, since the Apostles remained at Jerusalem. Especially was he recognized as leader because he at once began to display that power of working miracles which hitherto had been confined to the Twelve. He found himself, also, with a unique guidance and help of the Holy Ghost, by Whom he was carried about like some

Old Testament prophet. Moreover he had a very just claim to leadership in the Church, because he was the precursor of St. Paul in breaking through the Jewish barriers. Thus we find him going on the mission to the schismatic, heretical Samaritans, and baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch, who, as a eunuch, would have been excluded forever from full membership in the Jewish Church. But in spite of all his splendid special powers we never find him trying to exceed his deacon's authority of preaching and baptizing. And above all his miraculous gifts is his quiet obedience. When, for example, he was commanded to leave Samaria in the height of his success there, and go to the road which led through the deserted streets of ancient Gaza, he obeyed without a murmur, although this involved an apparently purposeless journey of fifty miles in length. Still more edifying is the way he quietly settled down into being a simple "parish" cleric at Cæsarea. There his own daughters apparently eclipsed him as a prophet (Acts xxi, 8 f.), and in every way he sank into obscurity. Yet he was far from idle. From the narrative of St. Peter's mission to Cornelius' household at Cæsarea, we learn that the centurion and his kinsfolk already knew about Christ (Acts x, 36 f.). They had been taught, also, to pray, fast, and give alms, which probably indicates some knowledge of the Sermon on the Mount. No doubt their instructor in all this was the saintly deacon.

Let us not think that we please Christ only when we are exercising some conspicuous gift in His

service. He loves best that obedience to Christian duty which is rendered silently and in obscurity, since this is for His eyes alone.



### **A Rule of Life**

There is a great advantage in approaching our spiritual business with a definite purpose as to what we hope to accomplish. This is the fundamental principle of "a rule," which is the written constitution of a life so systematized that all our faculties coöperate in attaining certain ends.

We could have no better example of this businesslike concentration of purpose than the spirit which dominated the composition of the Acts. For as we compare St. Luke's narrative with St. Paul's epistles, we are struck by the omissions in the former. It leaves out, for example, all mention of the Apostle's five scourgings and three beatings with the lictor's rods. Nor does it tell us of the loving care he received from Christians again and again. On the other hand, no instance is passed over where a proconsul, like Paulus or Gallio, helped him, or dealt with him justly according to Roman law. And St. Luke never loses an opportunity of describing the episode fully, when a Roman officer did St. Paul and his party a kindness. Moreover, he takes the greatest care to show that the charges against the missionaries were always preferred by the Jews, and that the Roman officials invariably pronounced them negligible or false. Now, why is this? It is because the Book of Acts

had for one of its purposes to be the brief of the Christian Church going up to the Supreme Court of the Empire to obtain a decree in favor of her liberty. If only the Cæsar could be led to pronounce the Christian Church a legal religion, no inferior tribunal would dare to interfere with the preaching of the Faith. Everything which was not in harmony with this purpose, St. Luke suppressed.

Let us adopt this single-minded devotion to Christ's business, and apply it to His work in our own souls. In other words, let us be very definite in regard to our prayers, meditations, preparation for Holy Communion, and all other means of spiritual development. The provisions we thus frame for ourselves will be our rule of life. St. Paul is the first of countless saints who have set us an example in this matter. For thus he summarizes his life, as Ramsay paraphrases his words: "I have competed in the honorable contest; I have run the race to a finish; I have *observed* the *rules* which are laid down for this race-course of faith" (2 St. Tim. iv, 7-8).

But we have a higher witness even than St. Paul. For our Lord, all through His life in the world kept His rule, as it was "written through the prophets for the Son of Man" (St. Luke xviii, 31, in the Greek). This exactness seems to have led to His saying "I thirst" as He suffered on the cross. It was not a complaint, of course; nor was it a request, for he would not receive more than a taste of the sour wine when it was offered Him. But he said the words "that the Scripture might be ful-

filled." Amid all the suffering, and the far more engrossing plans for our salvation, which filled that hour, He remembered this small detail of His rule of life. Evidently, then, exactness and regularity in devotion are not meticulous, but divine.



### **Absolute Obedience**

The conception of a person which his companions and associates have of him is a valuable sidelight on his character. It is profoundly interesting to us, therefore, that the Pythoness of Philippi recognized in St. Luke and his companions "the bond servants of the Most High God" (Acts xvi, 16 f.). For she must have thought this because she perceived their entire obedience to our Lord, in spite of all difficulties and dangers. Just as she was the slave of Apollo, bound to speak and act for him at his will, so these preachers of Christ were evidently His slaves.

And our Lord Himself makes it clear that He asks no less than entire obedience from us. "No household servant can be slave to two masters," He declared to His disciples (St. Luke xvi, 13, literally translated). We might indeed be *hired servants* to more than one employer. Brokers, for example, are agents for both parties to a business transaction. But a *slave* can own but one master, and the Christian must see his Master in Jesus Christ.

There is a great, practical stimulus in this truth that we belong absolutely to our Lord. It means that we must rise up and act for Him, not living

over again the discouraging failures and sins of our past, nor yet wasting time over imaginary enterprises in the future. The women who were groping among the dead were reproved by the holy angels (St. Luke xxiv, 5), and so were the Apostles who were gazing into space (Acts i, 10 f.). The work of both was on earth. The message our Lord sent them was "*Get to Work for Me.*" Let us remember that the domestic slaves of the Household of Faith are responsible for the tasks of to-day, and they are allowed no time for gloom over yesterday, nor over star-gazing as to the future.



### Habitual Detachment

There were two friends of St. Paul, who are frequently mentioned together in his epistles. These were St. Luke and Demas. Apparently both were Macedonians, and we may surmise that they had been friends before they attached themselves to the great missionary. Certainly both were faithful to their chief during the first captivity, and it may be that they still stood shoulder to shoulder at his side during the early part of the second. But here their paths in life diverged, St. Luke going on loyally with the poor, despised prisoner, and Demas shrinking away from him. The reason for the difference is not far to seek. Demas "loved this present world." He had not so loosened his hold on *things* that, when the great temptation to worldliness came, he was proof against it. What he needed was St. Luke's *habitual* detachment.



Deep down in the nature of each human being is the impulse to appropriate and store up one or another sort of things which appeal to him as valuable. In itself this instinct is necessary for the maintenance of our lives. But the danger always is that it will develop abnormally and become a selfish passion. Biologists, observing conspicuous instances of this excess, have thought that we inherit the acquisitive impulse of squirrels, which generally store up more nuts than they can consume in a winter. However this may be, we ought to be fully alive to the danger of so indulging our natural propensity to hoard that eventually, like Demas, we would come to love things more than God. There is a valuable corrective to this covetous disposition in generous almsgiving, and another in habitually, and sincerely, offering back to our Lord all we are, or have, that He may do with us as He wills.

With such a spirit of detachment, we may gain a title like that favorite one which St. Paul caught from his critics and adopted: "a fool." In sublime folly he had given up all for his Master, and the world accordingly treated him with supercilious pity. "Paul! Paul!" said Festus, as Ramsay paraphrases his words, "you are a great philosopher, but you have *no common sense*." In the same way people who are living for pleasure, or money, or the like, will think of us as "good folks, but unpractical," if we choose rather to own our wealth by using it, than to be owned by it by hoarding it.

How foolish his neighbors must have thought that man in the parable, who bought the field with the treasure hidden in it. He sold all that he had to obtain it (St. Matt. xiii, 44). Thus our Lord would teach us the glorious foolishness of sacrificing everything we have for the sake of gaining His hidden Kingdom.



### **Three Who Would Fain be Disciples**

The dear Saint, our instructor, seeks to impress unworldliness upon us by grouping the attempts of three fettered souls to become disciples of our Lord (ix, 57-62). This arrangement is uniquely his own and is plainly with the intention of teaching us to disengage our affections from the things of earth.

The first of the three was a scribe, probably therefore a man with a comfortable home, who, in a burst of enthusiasm, offered to follow our Lord whithersoever He should go. Now Christ did not reject him, but only bade him count the cost of discipleship in terms of detachment. "The foxes have holes," He said, "and the birds of the heaven have lodging places; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (cp. R. V., Marg.). Our Lord's meaning was not that He was utterly friendless and homeless, for St. Mary Magdalen and St. John Mark's family were always glad to receive Him. But He was pointing to the fact that He was more detached than the most typical vagabonds of nature. Thus He referred to the birds' nests as their "lodgings," or more literally "tents,"

that is, the places where they bivouacked between migrations. In the Old Testament, Jehovah, like the birds, had claimed for Himself a tent in which He traveled with His people through the wilderness, but now He would not appropriate even this much of earth. And His disciples must follow Him *in the spirit* of detachment, even though for most of us it must be at a great distance.

Our Lord Himself had called the second aspirant, saying, "Follow Me." He was met by a request, which was in effect an assertion that the disciple's first duty was to his father. It is disputed whether or not he implied that his father was dead, but in any case, his duty, as his son, to remain with him was among the Jews considered very sacred. The call of Christ is *imperative*, however, and takes precedence of all others. Therefore, our Lord followed it up with a direction requiring exactly the opposite course to that which the disciple had suggested. The latter had asked if he might first go and bury his father. But Christ answered, as His words have been paraphrased: "Depart, not home, but away from home; not to bury, but to spread abroad; not a father, but the Kingdom; not thine own, but God's."

The third man seems at first glance very pardonable for his imperfect discipleship. "I will follow Thee, Lord," he said, "but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house." Our Lord saw, however, that he had not burned his bridges behind him. He was still clinging to the attachments of the past. Only if he would look forward

over his spiritual plough-handles could he become fit for his work in the Kingdom.

In this thought that by detachment we advance the Kingdom of Christ, lies one powerful inspiration to unworldliness which our Saviour has not failed to urge most earnestly. We gain the Kingdom, indeed, for our own souls and others, by a holy poverty which makes us ever willing to give back our all to God, whenever He wills. "Blessed are ye poor, for yours *is* the Kingdom of God," is the first of the beatitudes. All the others, except that pronounced upon those who endure persecution, promise a future reward. But God immediately gives the whole Kingdom of Heaven with all its freedom, joy and peace, to the soul which gives up its tiny share of earth to Him.



### **The Religious Life**

There is a literal detachment from all material wealth which is possible for only a relatively small number of people especially called to it. This is the entire personal poverty which members of a Religious Order undertake to maintain.

God gave this life even to His Ancient Church, in proof of His love, and promised that there should always be Religious. "I raised up of your young men for Nazarites," He reminded the Jews as one of the three great manifestations of His love for them, the other two being that He had led them forty years through the wilderness, and had driven out the Amorite from before them (Amos ii, 11).

There were Religious conducting schools of the prophets, in the rooms built round the Temple area, and we can see from the words of Jeremiah that they were his chief comforters and friends (cp. e. g. Jer. xxxv, 4). But the most typical of God's poor in those ancient times were the "Sons of Jonadab," whose rule required perfect obedience to their superior, and poverty so absolute that it forbade them to have any dwelling except a tent. Moreover, God was pleased with them because they had proved faithful to their obligations even when severely tested, and He promised that their Community should continue to have spiritual progeny while the world lasts. "Jonadab the son of Rechab," so ran the divine decree, "shall not want a man to stand before Me forever" (Jer. xxxv, 18 f.). Therefore St. Jerome speaks of Jonadab, Elijah and Elisha as the "fathers of the monks."

Our guiding Saint sets us an example of this holy detachment, as of so many other Christian virtues. For he led the celibate life, in poverty we may be sure, since he was the intimate friend and follower of St. Paul. He alone noticed that, when our Lord promised to reward those who left all to follow Him, He mentioned leaving a wife (xviii, 29 f.). Was there some good and holy woman St. Luke would have sought in marriage except that he heard the call to follow Christ in entire detachment? We observe his great sympathy with women and his great appreciation of them, and we feel sure that he remained a celibate from no lower motive than that of devotion to his Master.

The great majority of Christians are not called to be Religious. It is their duty, however, to support the poor brethren of Christ with their prayers and alms, and to encourage a vocation in whomsoever it manifests itself. When our Saviour called the Rich Young Man to holy poverty, it was because He loved him (St. Mark x, 21). If He casts that look of love on anyone we can influence, let us see to it, if we can, that He is not disappointed.



### **The Banquet of Love, Spread for the Poor**

In the parable of the "Great Supper" and the many guests who all, with one consent, excused themselves (St. Luke xiv, 15-24) we are likely to overlook the fact that there were two invitations, one issued at the beginning of the preparations (v. 16) and the other when the banquet was at last ready (v. 17). It was considered a deadly insult to accept the first of such invitations, and then to decline the second. Yet at the last moment guests who had engaged to come sent such answers as these: "I am forced to go and see my new real estate again; please make my excuses"; "Sorry, but I am now on my way to test five yoke of oxen which I have just bought"; "I have just married a wife, and therefore I simply *cannot* come." Then the indignant host sent out swiftly for the poor. They would be available, he reasoned, because they would have no other invitations. And let the servants bring in the blind who could not see their real estate, the lame who could not test their oxen,

and the 'very badly maimed' who would not make very eligible bridegrooms. In a word, he sent for the detached, and they came crowding in to his supper.

Let us go back for a moment to the remark which occasioned this parable, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." Evidently, the "Great Supper" is a banquet upon the Bread of the Kingdom, and This is Jesus Christ (St. John vi, 48). That Living Bread was offered first in the Old Testament, and then again in the Gospel when all was "now ready." But so long as we care more for anything in the world than we do for Him we shall never so much as taste the Divine Supper.

Let us therefore trace out the inspiring life of one who sacrificed everything for Jesus. From her name Prisca, which is the cognomen of an excellent Roman family, and from St. Paul's custom of always mentioning her before her husband, we suppose that she was of noble rank. Her mate, Aquila, was a Jewish tent-maker, and probably, as his familiar slave name indicates, an emancipated slave (cp. Acts xviii, 3). Can we not read her story? She had preferred a humble tradesman's dwelling in the Jewish quarter to her own palace on one of the Seven Hills, for the sake of the Old Testament promises, later gloriously fulfilled when the Gospel came. For Jesus' sake she gave up even this home, when she and Aquila were expelled at the time of a riot, raised by the Jews, Suetonius says, because of one Chrestus (Christ). Years later, we find them

once more in their own house, but not without having risked it and their own lives too for Christ's great Apostle (Rom. xvi, 3). Finally, when St. Paul was arrested for the second time and the terrified Ephesians fled before Nero's cruelty, Prisca and her husband stood firm for their Lord (2 Tim. iv, 19).

No wonder St. Luke speaks of this noble Christian woman by the diminutive of affection, "Priscilla," "Little Prisca." A life like hers, fed on the Bread of Heaven, is instinct with the love which attracts love.



### **Poberty in Words and Thoughts**

It was our humble Leader's inveterate practice to say as little as possible about himself.

There is a delightful instance of this in his narrative of the journey to Rome, during St. Paul's first captivity. When, after the shipwreck, they had landed upon an island, St. Paul went in and miraculously healed the father of Publius, the local magistrate. Thereupon, we are told, "the rest also which had diseases in the island came and were cured." The word which is used of these cases, however, is one which implies medical treatment, nor does it in itself *necessarily* mean that the people were healed. Evidently they were treated by St. Luke the Beloved Physician, and successfully, as we infer from the text; but the saintly doctor has described his performance in such modest and even obscure language, that only exegesis brings



out the evidence of his hand in the cures. Yet his humility is perfectly unaffected and natural. He does not hesitate to state the simple truth in conclusion; saying, "they honored *us* with many honors." Contrast with this the seeming humility of the pagan philosopher, Phocion. After a speech which had been universally applauded, he used to ask his friends if he had inadvertently said anything wrong. How different his really vainglorious spirit was from the candor and sincerity of genuine Christian humility!

Our beloved Saint practiced this same spiritual poverty in his words about his ministry. His entire report of his participation in a long and apparently successful campaign in evangelizing the island of Cyprus, consists of a single brief clause (Acts xiii, 6). He was left at Philippi for some years, and was entrusted with extending the Faith throughout all Macedonia. He was very successful, too, as we know from St. Paul, who tells us that his praise in the preaching of the Gospel was spread through all the Greek Churches (2 Cor. viii, 18). But St. Luke never so much as mentions even the fact that he was stationed at Philippi.

Moreover, besides setting us this example of restraint in speech, he inculcates a still stricter spiritual poverty, as to self-regarding *thoughts*, which, even if innocent, are yet fruitless. In his Gospel he displays vividly before us the perfection of Christ in this virtue. For instance, he shows us the remarkable fact that our Lord never returned to Bethlehem, from His infancy to His last day upon

earth. Evidently He would not allow Himself to be influenced by a sentiment, which, if natural, sweet, and pure, would not promote His spiritual enterprise. We may be able to follow Him in this heroic detachment only very imperfectly, but at least His example must stimulate us to press on towards the goal of our "upward calling," keeping our merely natural sentiments in their true subordinate place (Phil. iii, 14, R. V. Marg.).



### **The Receptive Attitude of the Soul**

It is a fundamental principle of our religion that the true attitude for a Christian is that of being *receptive* to heavenly gifts. God freely gives us all the good which He can by any means persuade us to accept from Him. This is the marvelous truth which the Bible reveals to us in its passages on predestination: God has eternally predetermined to bestow upon every soul He creates all the graces and blessings which He foresees that He can induce it to receive from His hand. Our Lord represented to us this primary fact of the spiritual life by describing our relation to God as that of little children to a loving father. "Verily I say unto you," were His words, "whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (St. Luke xviii, 17). A child takes what is offered it in simple trust, and so must we receive what God offers us.

Let us apply this principle to the sacramental system. It will enable us to answer one of the

most plausible objections to the Catholic teaching about the great mysteries of grace. We are often met with the argument that Catholics attribute a magical effect to the water, or the bread and wine, or the oil, because we teach that the sacraments convey their graces to souls which have done nothing to merit such great blessings. How can a little, helpless baby, incapable even of believing in God ever so dimly, become His child, through having a little water poured upon it and a stereotyped form of words pronounced? We answer that the innocent soul does not *bar out* the grace of Holy Baptism, and therefore since it is *receptive*, the God of overflowing Love withholds from it no grace or gift of all which the initial sacrament confers. In the same way, we can believe that all the means of grace have the immense value which the Church attributes to them, if we realize that their virtue depends primarily, not upon the poor human recipient, but upon God, the omnipotent Lover of souls.

This is the application of the truth before us in so far as it teaches us how ready God is to bestow all the treasures of His love upon us. But it includes also the thought of our being eager to receive divine grace. Is any matter of daily life so trifling that we can afford to ignore the help of God Who thus waits to be gracious to us? The seven deacons were chosen for no more difficult duty than the fair and satisfactory distribution of food to a number of good women, yet the Twelve rightly considered that they "must be full of the Holy

Ghost and wisdom" (Acts vi, 1-3). For all Church work is really spiritual, wherefore they must be full of the Spirit, and if they were to unite compassion and sympathy with impartiality and firmness, they must also be full of wisdom. As St. Chrysostom puts it: "It needed great philosophy to bear the complaints of the widows."

Thus the Apostolic Church would teach us that no business wherein we touch others' souls is so trivial but that we ought beforehand to receive into our hearts the Giver of all Good, Who is continually knocking and begging entrance there (Rev. iii, 20).



### **The Cross, Christ's Throne of Love**

Our Blessed Saviour looked forward to His Passion as being the means by which His love for us would be brought to its full expression. "The third day, I am perfected," He told the Jews with reference to His death (St. Luke xiii, 32). Bishop Westcott says: "The idea of St. Luke in speaking of Christ as being 'perfected' is of bringing Christ to the full moral perfection of His humanity, which carries with it the completeness of power and dignity." Jesus, therefore, eagerly desired to endure His cross because by it He would gain for Himself supreme kingly power to help men. His favorite title for Himself was, not "Son of God," but "Son of Man," because this latter, as the Jews well understood, betokened a suffering Messiah.

It is significant of this same truth, moreover, that Christ refused to accept kingship until the eve

of His Passion. Again and again, the people, burning with enthusiasm and devotion, sought to make Him a king even by force. But He would reign only from His cross over a realm of purified, loving hearts.

Accordingly, the trial before the High Priest was to Him the eve of His coronation. How royally He proclaimed to the Sanhedrin: "*From henceforth shall the Son of Man be seated at the right hand of the power of God, and coming on the clouds of Heaven*" (St. Luke xxii, 69; St. Matt. xxvi, 64)! The gibbet to which they were condemning Him would be His royal throne of love and power, and 'from that moment' He would be coming on the somber clouds of His Passion to reign in many hearts,—in the hearts of even the mere onlookers or of those who were but a little time before enemies of the Crucified.



### **The Crucified Striving in Love with Hostile Souls**

Strange as was the claim of Jesus that He would exercise divine power from His throne on the Tree, it was proved true by the appeal of His love even to those who were hostile spectators of His Passion. Their cold hearts had unconsciously come too near the furnace of love in the sacred heart of Christ, and they were warmed in spite of themselves.

Yet there was one group which held out even against the tug at their hearts of God's supreme

Act of Charity. These were the Scribes and Pharisees. All through His ministry, our Lord had striven to win them. He convinced them against their wills, over and over again, that He was their own Messiah. But they only scoffed at His teaching with a grimace of derision, as St. Luke's Greek word indicates (e. g. xvi, 14, where the word translated "to deride" means literally "to turn up the nose"). Consequently their hearts were the more averted from Jesus, because He offered Himself on the cross for them. They prove to us that if we persistently resist our Lord's pleading, there will come a time at last when His very love will harden us against Him, just as it is true that the same heat which softens wax will harden mud.

But those people who came out to gaze upon the spectacle idly, and with coarse jests at the expense of Him Who had boasted, as they said one to another, of His power to destroy the Temple and build it again in three days, were not proof against the divine charity which sought them out and touched them with compunction. For we read that they "beat their breasts and returned."

The Roman soldiers, moreover, who had driven home the spikes with the callous indifference their trade had taught them, were drawn by an irresistible power to the crucified King. The centurion stood over against the cross watching the Sufferer as we gather from the several descriptions in the Gospels. Evidently, he was reflecting upon the scene and studying our Lord's behavior.

"Verily," he exclaimed at the end, "this was a righteous Man. Verily, this Man was the Son of God." St. Chrysostom relates that he became a saint and a martyr. The soldier, also, whose spear was thrust into our Lord's breast, became a martyr, won by seeing that even in death the heart of the immaculate Victim was a fountainhead of purifying, healing streams.

There is a beautiful old tradition that Christ cried out from the cross that saying, quoted by St. Paul: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Whether or not it be true, as the legend asserts that our Lord spoke these words to those who were buried near His cross, they describe admirably well the way in which the Sun of Righteousness, in what seemed His setting, drove away the shadows of death from all hearts which did not wilfully and persistently reject Him. May the glory of Jesus' love for me shine in upon my soul and lift me from darkness and death to light and life immortal!



### **Love for the Crucified Converting the Lukewarm**

Before the "good thief" was lifted on his cross to hang and suffer by the side of Jesus, he was already half converted. For he had seen the perfect righteousness of our Saviour through all the trials of His Passion. Even the unrepentant malefactor seems to have perceived something divine about the Lamb of God, for he said to Jesus,

"Art not Thou the Christ? Save Thyself and us." And his fellow must have been drawn to observe closely the perfect holiness of the Divine Victim, for he declared that Christ had "done nothing out of place" (St. Luke xxiii, 41, in the Greek). Not one look, or accent of voice, had been "unbecoming," far less sinful, in the dear Sufferer's demeanor during the baseless accusations and cruel insults of His trial, and along the Way of the Cross. Thus the spiritual beauty of Christ had already begun to win the faith and devotion of the malefactor. And now the holy flame of Christ's personal love for him leaped from the heart of His Saviour to his own, kindling within him a great answering devotion, and communicating to him a wonderful warmth and energy, so that he was able to suffer patiently through the long hours until his release came.

St. Simon of Cyrene, too, must have been unwilling indeed to help Jesus carry His cross, when he was first pressed into service. But his nearness to our Saviour, even in sharing with Him that hard labor and degradation, won his heart, so that afterwards, it is believed, he and his family became Christians (cp. St. Mark xv, 21, and Romans xvi, 13).

But the most typical examples of lukewarm souls won to entire devotion through the power of the King of Love upon His cross, were St. Nicodemus and St. Joseph of Arimathea. The former came to our Lord at first (St. John iii, 2) by night. Then, gaining a little more courage, he dared to assert before the Sanhedrin the right of Christ to be heard



before He was condemned (St. John vii, 51). Finally, when his Master was dead, he was so won by love for the Crucified that he came through the broad daylight, laden with a hundred-weight of spices, to embalm the sacred Body. St. Joseph, in much the same way, had been "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews" (St. John xix, 38). Not until the consummation of our Lord's crowning Act of Love, did he gain the boldness to go forward before the eyes of all Jerusalem and beg the mangled Corpse from the heathen governor. Thus hearts which the Son of God by stupendous miracles, by unparalleled eloquence, and, most of all, by the almost constraining attraction of His Divine Person, could not win to more than half-hearted loyalty, were kindled to a consuming passion of love by the poor ruined Failure, as He seemed, crucified between malefactors upon the gibbet of a convict! If God had revealed Himself in Christ as magnificent, omnipotent, awful, we might have withstood His claim upon our allegiance. But "the weakness of God" is so strong that it lays hold upon our hearts with invincible power, takes them from us and lays them down as trophies at the pierced feet of our Saviour (1 Cor. i, 25).



### **The Love of the Crucified Perfecting His Disciples**

It was impossible that the great Lover of Souls, in the moment when His devotion to them was

consuming Him like a flame, should have failed to exert His power for the help of His dearest friends. It is significant that all save one of those who stood protectingly about the foot of the cross were women. No virile masculine loyalty, of a natural kind, sustained the little band of defenders. Divine charity from the heart of Jesus upheld weak women by its subtle, mighty energy.

There was indeed another who watched the Master throughout the Three Hours of His agony. It was a man, with disheveled grey beard and hair, and hollow, sunken eyes, who from afar peered through the darkness toward the dim Figure on the cross. Peter, too, was drawing strength from 'witnessing the sufferings of Christ' (1 St. Peter v, 1). Except for the love which Jesus then inspired in him, he might have perished, as Judas did, from remorse; but love turned his sorrow for his denials into the sweet pain of repentance.

The Holy Women, who stood near Christ's feet with Mary His mother, followed their Master to the very end, and therefore they merited to see Him first after He was risen (St. Luke xxiii, 55; xxiv, 22 f.). It is thus that Christ's love for us first inspires and assists our every step forward in holy perseverance, and then, at the last, rewards what it has itself achieved in our weak nature. All that is required of us is that we permit our Master to lead us on by the drawing of His own unspeakable charm, until at last we reach perfection. Our strength is in Christ, and in our hearts, therefore, are the highways to Zion. Passing through the

Valley of Weeping we find it a place of springs, where the abundant "early rain" of grace covers all the earth with blessings. We shall go from virtue to virtue, and every one of us shall appear before God in Zion (Psalm lxxxiv, 5-7; cp. R.V.).



### **Charity the Greatest Commandment**

The entire life of our Divine Master, culminating in His Self-oblation on the cross for love of us, teaches us the lesson that God-like charity is the greatest of all virtues. The very last night before He suffered, Jesus gave us the great Christian precept to love one another as He had loved us.

Love is so preëminently the supreme law, that in any case of doubt it should be applied rather than severity. Characteristically, St. Luke has preserved an episode in Christ's ministry which wonderfully illustrates this truth (ix, 53-56). He tells us that our dear Lord was refused admittance by a surly Samaritan village where He would have spent the night. Thereupon St. James and St. John blazed out in anger, and would have called down fire from Heaven upon the inhospitable schismatics. But, instead, they brought a rebuke from our Lord upon their own heads, because they were not guided by the Spirit of Love.

Yet their error was almost inevitable. For (1) our Lord Himself had appeared to approve their natural vehemence by giving them the name "Boanerges." "What wonder," says St. Ambrose, "if the Sons of Thunder wanted to lighten?" (2) They

had but just seen Elijah "in glory," the object of divine love above nearly all the Old Testament saints. But the prophet thus signally distinguished by God's favor had called down lightning on Jehovah's enemies. (3) It is probable that they saw disappointed love and grief in the face of Jesus. The fact that He, a Jew, was willing to accept the hospitality of Samaritans, and had already spent several days in Sychar, ought to have disarmed them. That He felt their unkindness appears from His saying, on the way to another village: "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Is it any wonder if the two Apostles would have invoked divine vengeance upon those who had so wounded their gentle Master?

But, under the Christian reign of love, it is the false prophet who calls down fire from Heaven (Rev. xiii, 13). True servants of Jesus will pray God to send the Holy Ghost upon the very souls which have injured them, as St. John, when he was guided by the true Spirit, brought His sacred Flame down upon those churlish Samaritans (Acts viii, 14-17).



### **The Love of the Crucified and the Penitent**

The charity of Incarnate God reached its perfect development only on Calvary, and, therefore, we are not surprised that it spared those round Him to the utmost that was possible. It seems that the Blessed Mother was sent away in the care of St. John after the third Word from the cross, in

order that she might be saved from the anguish of witnessing the long hours of her Son's crucifixion.

But there was One upon Whom Christ had no mercy, and to Whom He showed no tenderness, no love. This was Himself. Once, in the synagogue at Nazareth, He had read to the people, from Isaiah, the prophecy that He would heal the broken-hearted. Then He saw in the faces of His old friends and neighbors the retort plainly written, "Physician, heal Thyself" (St. Luke iv, 23). It was as much as to say: "Thou art sent to heal the broken-hearted. Well, then, heal Thine own broken heart." And He could not accept their challenge. It was one miracle which He was powerless to perform, because He must be true to His vocation as the Man of Sorrows.

Therefore, we behold in Jesus crucified the very picture of tragic destitution. He is stripped of all which makes life even bearable. The Jews have rejected Him as their Messiah. The Romans have crowned Him with a chaplet of thorns as a travesty on the chaplet of their Cæsar, and in mockery saluted Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" as a parody on "Hail, Cæsar!" thus in utter derision rejecting Him as their Emperor. All His friends are scattered from Him or have been dismissed in obedience to His love and pity for them, with one single exception. The Magdalen remained, so the ancient tradition asserts, clasping in her arms the sacred feet which have journeyed all the way from Heaven to this shameful, horrible death for her. This one comforter is left to wait beside the hard

death-bed of God Incarnate. For penitence will not leave the feet of the Crucified, since it finds there the peace and joy of offering itself in reparation for the countless wounds to His love.



### **The Example of Jesus in His Passion**

We degrade the cross of Christ into an object of merely sentimental feeling, if we do not use it as the medicine of our soul. We must not rest content in a mere external use of it, nor receive its power through sacraments, and afterwards permit the grace given us to remain without effect in our daily lives. Let us then gain some lessons from His example, Who made His cross the instrument of our salvation.

First of all He teaches us to cast out self-love. Though He was perfect, He subjected Himself to mortifications beyond the greatest spiritual austerities of the saints. When, for example, He had led His three chief friends to behold His divine glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, He drew them also to see the humiliation and human weakness of His agony in Gethsemane (St. Luke ix, 28-35; St. Mark xiv, 33-35). Are *we* willing that those who have seen us triumph should, afterwards, see us faint and fail?

It is a strange and divinely beautiful thing to see how He quite forgot His own mortal danger in seeking the salvation of His false judges in the way which would most appeal to each. To the Jewish High Priest, whose mind could

not help being full of prophecies about the Messiah, He spoke in Messianic language. For Caiaphas expected that the Saviour would descend to earth on the clouds of heaven, and he had been taught from boyhood David's saying that the Righteous King would sit at the right hand of God (Psalm cx, 1). Jesus, therefore, sought to elicit from the High Priest faith in Himself by asserting His Messiahship, knowing that His claim of divine power would be abundantly proved before the eyes of Caiaphas by the conversions He would obtain from the throne of His cross. On the other hand, in His trial before Pilate He sought to win the governor through his Roman interest in the study of truth. "For this cause came I into the world," said the Wisdom of God, "that I should bear witness unto the truth." True love for souls, therefore, will, with consecrated tact, adapt itself to the capacity of those it seeks to help.

When, finally, this King of Love was nailed to the cross by the Roman soldiers, and saw the cruel faces of the Jews who had gathered round Him to gloat over His suffering, He did not ascribe His abjection and agony to these human foes, but to Satan, who was sheltering himself behind them. It was "the principalities and powers" of evil over whom He triumphed in His cross (Col. ii, 15). The hateful malevolence so plainly expressed in the faces of the Jews, He thought of as but a shadow of "the power of darkness" (St. Luke xxii, 53). And St. Paul seeks to impress upon all Christians the lesson of charity thus preached to us from the

pulpit of the cross. "Our wrestling," he writes, "is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness" (Eph. vi, 12, R.V.). If we can only remember this truth, we shall never again sin by anger or hatred against our neighbors.

Let me then conclude this Passion Week by dedicating my whole heart to Jesus on His cross. It is related of King Robert Bruce that in his will he directed the "Black Douglas," the bravest and most powerful of his nobles, to take his royal master's heart, carry it to the Holy Sepulchre and bury it there. But let us lay our living hearts at the foot of the cross, not to disintegrate, but to beat for our King with the tireless energy of love.



### **Perseverance in Loyalty to Christ**

A great multitude of enthusiastic disciples, with their palms and olive branches, welcomed our Lord as He rode into Jerusalem on the first day of Holy Week. No one would have supposed that these same people, who then greeted Christ as their King and Saviour, would on the following Friday, less than a week afterwards, be crying "Crucify Him!" One great lesson of Palm Sunday for us, therefore, is perseverance in our devotion to our Lord.

Out of that long procession which cast down even its holiday garments in the way before Jesus, one group remained faithful. Even the Apostles seem



to have fallen silent after they entered Jerusalem, troubled, perhaps, by the frowns of the leaders in Church and State. But the children never ceased shouting their "Hosannah to the Son of David!" even after they had passed with Him into the sacred precincts of the Temple. And we are commanded to be as these little children, whose devotion withstood the ridicule and hostility of His enemies.

There are also two women in the New Testament, who wonderfully illustrate the virtue of perseverance. One of them shows us the ease with which we may fall away from our first love for Christ, and the other teaches us that grace can sustain our loyalty to Him unto the end. The former of these two is called by St. John, "Jezebel" (Rev. ii, 20-23). The whole Church of Thyatira is reprovved because of her evil influence over it, and in many editions of Revelation she is referred to as the "wife" of the "angel," which certainly indicates that she was a very prominent leader in her parish, and possessed great power over the bishop. No doubt she was foremost in the good works for which Thyatira is praised (*v.* 19). Besides she claimed to be a prophetess and had a knowledge which was showy enough to gain for her a reputation for being intellectual. From what St. John says, she had the name of understanding the "deep things" — "of Satan," the Apostle adds. The saddest thing about her is the fact that probably she had been a sincere convert in the beginning, and then gradually yielded to the subtle, persistent pressure of the pagan so-

ciety around her. Her opposite, Lydia, was also from Thyatira. It is likely that both women were engaged in the fabrics trade, which was the business of nearly all the wealthy people in the city, and both were probably very influential among their fellow Christians. But Lydia, from the time that she received St. Paul and his companions into her house, and established there the infant Church of Philippi, was the faithful servant of Christ and fellow-laborer with St. Paul. It is to her, probably, that he refers as his "true yoke-mate," and whom he entreats to help in making up the quarrel between two other women, namely Euodias and Syntyche (Phil. iv, 2 f.). From her house, also, and very likely from her purse, went the gifts of money which helped and comforted St. Paul. During the years of his captivity he must have spent considerable sums of money, and as he had none of his own, it is conjectured with much probability, that he was supplied to the end of his life by this same faithful woman.

Surely, each one of us desires to persevere as Lydia did, but only grace can enable us to follow her and the other blessed ones of Christ. It is noteworthy that there is no instance in the Gospels of a woman being hostile to Him, or denying or betraying Him. The weaker sex became the stronger in support of our Saviour, no doubt because they constantly sought and obtained His help. Only through prayer and sacrament can we be faithful unto death and receive the crown.



### **Preserving the Spiritual Gains of Lent**

Our saintly Instructor in the spiritual life has handed down to us a saying of our Lord which should impress upon us deeply the obligation of keeping our Lenten resolutions. "Do you *lay up* in your ears what I teach," Christ said to His disciples (ix, 44). It was His vivid way of urging us not to waste the greater knowledge of Him and of ourselves which we have gained during the spiritual exercises of these Forty Days. The Psalmist, issuing from some such season of quiet communion with God as we have been enjoying, declared to Him: "Thy words have I hid within my heart, that I should not sin against Thee."

In another passage our Lord contrasts an honest and good heart with its opposite, in three particulars (St. Luke viii, 15): (1) The former *receives* the good seed. The word of God "falls into" the fertile soil of a loving heart, and not simply upon it, as one which is hardened like a beaten path. (2) It brings forth fruit, unlike a heart full of the brambles of worldly desires and cares which never produces anything but leaves. (3) It bears fruit "with perseverance." In this, particularly, it is in contrast with the shallow heart, which will bear no fruit except such as can be brought forth with facility and speed.

It is still more important for us to consider that we have now learned to love Christ better than we did on Ash Wednesday. To put away from ourselves this new-born affection for Him is for us,

His familiar friends, to become like the rabble who rejected Christ, shouting "Away with this fellow from our midst," in insulting reference to that text of the Law which says: "Put away *evil* from your midst."

Again they cried out to Pilate: "Not this fellow, but Barabbas." Probably the full name of the robber was "Jesus Barabbas," meaning "Jesus, son of the father," according to one version of St. Matthew. Thus he was a travesty upon Jesus Christ. But we Christians would be crying out like the Jews, in actions louder than words, preferring a sinner to our Saviour, if we thrust Jesus away and chose our own self-will instead.



### **Perseverance in Prayer**

We learn from three of the Gospels that when our Saviour died on the cross, the great blue veil, which hung before the Holy of Holies in the Temple, was rent from top to bottom, so that the commonest worshipper could approach the Mercy Seat. The sacred enclosure was at the time full of priests, a double line of whom stretched along the full length of it on both sides, prepared to sacrifice the lambs for the Passover. Now, we observe that almost at once after the Apostolic Church came into existence, "a great number of the priests were obedient to the Faith." It appears, therefore, that many of the Jewish hierarchy took to heart God's object lesson of the rent veil and the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, open to the humblest of the

faithful. They understood that the Lamb of God had been slain once for all, and that henceforth all men would have the freest access to their Heavenly Father through the riven Veil of His Flesh.

As, after Easter, we enter once more upon our less protected life in the world, let it be with entire faith in our Lord's power and loving willingness to grant our every prayer. The Good Shepherd is now carrying us on His shoulders. It is true that He took us in His everlasting arms, and laid us in His bosom, first at our baptism, but He will continue to sustain and protect us there, until He has brought us home to His sheepfold in Heaven. And His whole limitless power and love are engaged in enabling us to make that journey in perfect safety. Of course the answer to our prayer may not always be just to our natural liking. But we can trust the God Who delivered up even His own Son for us all, freely with Him to give us all things (Roman viii, 32).

Prayer, therefore, must not end with Lent. Once we have understood our own need and the omnipotence and love of God, we cannot but say with the ancient prophet: "I have put off the clothing of peace and put upon me the sackcloth of my prayer. I will cry unto the Everlasting all my days" (Baruch iv, 20).



### **Perseverance in Meditation**

It was on this day in Holy Week, as we believe, that our Lord was teaching in the Temple, while the

Jewish hierarchy were hovering near, watching for an opportunity to have Him arrested (St. Luke xix, 45-48). The picture which the sacred artist draws is of our Lord sitting with a throng of people in a half-circle round Him. He was speaking to them the words of divine truth, with that marvelous simplicity and sweetness which they so dearly loved. And they were "hanging on His lips listening," in the eagerness of their desire to catch every word (xix, 48; cp. R.V.). In this way, they unconsciously frustrated the plot of the Jewish priests, for they formed a cordon about our Lord, and the hierarchy could find no way to seize Him without being mobbed by the populace. Through the practice of meditation we become defenders of our Lord as truly as the multitude this day were His protectors. For we learn from His lips the answers to the cavils against His religion by which His enemies attack Him. Could we have a greater inspiration to persevere in this practice, however difficult it may be?

Moreover, if we take to heart the Word which has fallen from the lips of Incarnate God, we shall find it a most effective instrument for our own salvation. The sacred writers suggest to us three ways in which, with kind severity, Christ uses meditation upon the Gospels for the purposes of His spiritual surgery: (1) The Word of God has power to "saw through" a heart which is opposed to the teaching of Christ (Acts v, 33, in the Greek). Therefore it will be effective to remove from us any prejudice we may have against the doctrines

of the Catholic Faith. (2) It pricks or pierces our hearts with contrition (Acts ii, 37). The rare verb here used is the same as that which appears in St. John's Gospel where he speaks of the spear piercing our Lord's heart. By meditation, then, I shall lay open my heart to receive Him Whose breast was riven that He might receive me into the sacred cleft (St. John xix, 34). (3) The Word is sharper than any two-edged sword and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. iv, 12). Accordingly, by meditation our Lord takes away the bad from docile souls, especially by teaching them to know which of their thoughts and motives are according to His mind.

There is a phrase frequently used by St. Luke which sums up perfectly the greater depth of knowledge and faith we gain by meditation. He speaks of those who "believe *into* Christ" (e.g. Acts x, 43, in the Greek). If we would really enter into our Lord's own life and love, so that we may claim it for our own and be prepared to teach it to others, we must learn first to "hang upon His lips listening."



### **Perseverance in Receiving the Blessed Sacrament**

There were two reasons for our Lord's strife and suffering in Gethsemane (St. Luke xxii, 39-44). First, He had to take the sin of the world upon His own immaculate soul in some mysterious way yet so really that He could make reparation to His

Father for the iniquity of every sinner throughout all the ages of human history. For this unspeakably fearful load an angel came and strengthened Him. Secondly, after He had become the Sin-bearer, He fell into an agony of supplication, and it was then He sank down prone on His face and sweated blood from His sacred body, while at the same time He prayed "with strong crying and tears" (Heb. v, 7). What was this prayer? It was, as Bishop Westcott explains to us, for victory over death, the fruit of sin. For, St. Paul declares, He lifted up His supplications that God would "save Him *out from death*" (R.V.). While His prayer that the cup of the world's sin might pass from him was not granted, God, His Father, "heard" this petition for conquest over death.

Let us pause for a moment with reverent love over that tremendous struggle of our Saviour. The Jews had a saying that there are three kinds of supplication, each loftier than the preceding: prayer, crying out, and tears. Prayer is made in silence, they used to teach; and crying out, with raised voice; but tears overcome all things. "There is no door through which tears do not pass." The victory over the grave, therefore, was not lightly won. It required the utmost effort on our Lord's part. And we cannot dwell too often upon the fact that it was won because our Lord freely willed to bear the whole cruel weight of His Passion. "He was heard," says Primasius, "for His reverence, that is, His voluntary obedience and His most perfect love."



But if Jesus thus fought His way through the mortal strife which began in Gethsemane, that He might force the gate of death and issue victor for Himself and us, how can He transmit this victory of His to us who live nearly nineteen centuries after His Resurrection? The answer of St. Paul is that He imparts to us the power to overcome death through the Blessed Sacrament of His living and life-giving Body. No more than Christ can faithful communicants be holden of death, for "God shall raise up us also *by Jesus*" upon Whom we feed in the Divine Mysteries of the Altar (2 Cor. iv, 14; St. John vi, 54).



### **Perseverance in Living the Crucified Life**

There is at the end of St. Luke's Gospel a delicate suggestion of the reason Christ led His Apostles to the Mount of Olives to witness His Ascension (xxiv, 50). It was because He would in this way pass with them over the Way of the Cross, and thus teach them that they would finally ascend to their eternal home only by the path of the crucified life.

He "led them out," as the shepherds led their flocks, and so by implication He taught them that He would be none the less the Good Shepherd going before His flock when, later, He would share the weight of His cross with them. Indeed, when they came to suffer, then of all times they were to consider that they were His "chosen vessels," as

afterwards He declared explicitly in the case of St. Paul (Acts ix, 15).

Over Kedron, past Gehenna, and on towards Bethany, where our Lord had been anointed for His burial, lay the journey. At every step memories of their Lord's Passion would arise to meet the disciples. Surely Christ had planned to teach this nucleus of His Church that persecution, insult and ill-treatment of all kinds are like sign-boards along the road to eternal life. And could we ask an easier way than that worn by the pierced feet of Jesus? St. John marks four kinds of contumely which He endured on His cross: (1) The people gazed at Him in vulgar curiosity, as at a spectacle; (2) the rulers scoffed continually at Him; (3) the soldiers mocked Him, pledging Him in their cups and challenging Him to drink their health in return, and (4) the unrepentant robber blasphemed Him. Why, then, are we so sensitive to the least slight, when the way to have the truest fellowship with the abject Man of Sorrows is to endure meekly whatever men put upon us. Saints like Francis of Assisi have thought it the greatest of all distinctions to bear the *stigmata*, the marks on their own hands and feet of the wounds in our Saviour's body. Perhaps it may come to us to be stigmatized in a different way. Let us resolve that if it shall ever be so with us, we will bear our Lord's spiritual wounds as marks of the highest honor.

On the side of the Mount of Olives lay the Garden of Gethsemane and the knoll of Calvary, so

that the hearts of the little band must have been very full of Holy Week memories as they reached the summit from which our Lord was about to ascend. By an acted sermon, He had taught them that the way to the exaltation of the Ascension is identical with that of exaltation upon a cross. And as they had come only a little way, a "Sabbath Day's journey," as St. Luke calls it (Acts 1, 12), so they were to understand that by a little labor they would get themselves much rest, even an eternal rest, in the presence and love of the Blessed Trinity.



### **Perseverance Unto a Holy Death**

From the style of the Acts, and of the second epistle to St. Timothy, as well as some other of St. Paul's epistles, it is reasonably certain that St. Luke acted as an amanuensis to the great Apostle. Probably, then, he was with St. Paul when the latter was arrested the second time in Ephesus. There was such terror all abroad among the Christians that those in Asia forsook the prisoner, except ever-faithful Priscilla, her husband and St. Luke. Even St. Timothy's nerves were terribly shaken, so that St. Paul warned him "not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of His prisoner, but to suffer hardships with the Gospel" (2 Tim. i, 7, 8). The unshrinking perseverance unto death of the beloved St. Luke thus comes clearly into view. Valiantly and lovingly, he became the prey of the lions, or was crucified, or was made one of the hu-

man torches in Nero's garden, and went to his end like a true disciple of the Crucified.

St. Luke was comforted and strengthened by a joyous hope, which we see clearly appearing in his report of St. Peter's sermon on Pentecost (ii, 26). For he prefers that lovely reading of the Psalm passage cited by the Apostle: "My flesh shall pitch its tent upon hope." No doubt he appreciated the full meaning of David, that hope is like a promontory extending out into "the unknown," upon which the frail tabernacle of the body can safely rest. And how his face must have lighted up afresh with that wonderful hope when, as St. Paul's secretary, he wrote down the words in which the Apostle declares the future glory of our flesh (2 Cor. v, 1-4). They had sat together while St. Paul stitched away on a tent, and had seen from their window the magnificent public buildings of Corinth, until presently it was borne in upon the mind of the great Apostle that the Christian's flesh in its present state is as inferior to his body as it will be in its resurrection glory as the tent he was making was mean in comparison with the famous marble state buildings of the city. "We know," he presently wrote triumphantly to the Corinthians, "that if our tent-dwelling upon earth should be pulled down, we have a stately edifice from God, a dwelling for our souls throughout eternity in Heaven." Let us on this Holy Sabbath claim for ourselves St. Luke's hope.

St. Luke and St. Paul loved best to speak of Christ's coming as His "revelation" of Himself.

The expression indicates the belief of the Apostolic Church that their Lord was in the midst of them, and would, in His own time, "appear" by simply drawing back the veil which hid Him from them. Let us apply their conception to our own death when our Saviour shall come to us in the Viaticum, and at the end of our mortal strife draw aside the veil and manifest Himself plainly to our timid, longing hearts. All our life is to be lived in preparation for that meeting. As once Jesus traveled unto Emmaus with Cleophas, and with one other, who we think was St. Luke, so He would walk by our side through our whole pilgrimage, until we come to the evening of life. The hour will strike when the shadows will be falling fast upon our eyes. But within our hearts all will be joy unspeakable, for Jesus will make Himself known to us, as never before, in the Breaking of the Bread.







